

COUNTRY LIFE

THE JOURNAL FOR ALL INTERESTED IN
COUNTRY LIFE AND COUNTRY PURSUITS.

ILLUSTRATED.

VOL. IV.—No. 99. [REGISTERED AT THE
G.P.O. AS A NEWSPAPER.] SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 26th. 1898.

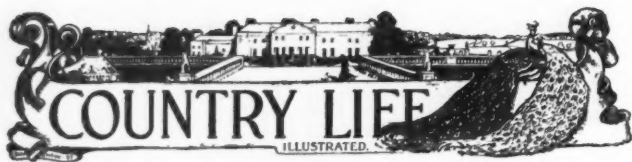
[PRICE SIXPENCE
BY POST, 6½D.]



Photo. J. THOMSON.

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THE Journal for all interested in
Country Life and Country Pursuits.

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EDITORIAL NOTICE.

The Editor will be glad to receive for consideration photographs, instantaneous or otherwise, besides literary contributions, in the shape of articles and descriptions, as well as short stories, sporting or otherwise, not exceeding 2,000 words. Contributors are specially requested to place their names and addresses on their MSS. and on the backs of photographs. The Editor will not be responsible for the return of artistic or literary contributions which he may not be able to use, and the receipt of a proof must not be taken as evidence that an article is accepted. Publication in COUNTRY LIFE alone will be recognised as acceptance. Where stamps are enclosed, the Editor will do his best to return those contributions which he does not require.

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LONDON BIRDS AND BEASTS.

A WRITER in the *Edinburgh Review* recently showed that twenty-seven species of birds were still resident and nested in the "County of London." Many of these, especially the wood-pigeons and water-fowl, are certainly tamer there than elsewhere, except the wildfowl on a few strictly-preserved private lakes; and as Mr. A. D. Bartlett, the late superintendent of the Zoo, claimed that people in town have better chances than those anywhere else in England of becoming acquainted with the ways and appearance of foreign animals also, London ought to be a first-class field for the amateur as well as the scientific naturalist. Whether it is so depends, there as everywhere else, largely on the person interested. A perusal of the two latest books on the subject, the reminiscences of Mr. Bartlett, "Wild Animals in Captivity" (Chapman and Hall), and "London Birds" (Longmans), by Mr. W. H. Hudson, illustrates these differences. The notes and papers left by Mr. Bartlett, though they suffer by scrappy editing, and the author never held the pen of a ready writer, are first-hand experiences; yet his anecdotes and *obiter dicta* on life at the Zoo in the early days fail to arouse the interest which the same events, treated by his friend, Frank Buckland, did when previously published in his various collected articles.

The mental equipment of the scientific naturalist, who was also an observer, carried him many degrees beyond the clever old keeper of the Zoo, whose opportunities for noting the ways of animals in captivity were largely wasted from want of the trained intelligence which could make inferences from what he saw. The greater number of Mr. Bartlett's reminiscences are

confined to details of daily care and maintenance, anecdotes of the escape of animals, the difficulties encountered in moving them, or ingenious shifts and expedients for managing and humouring them. But in the course of his long life at the Zoo he did make certain observations of London beasts in captivity, very suggestive to those who can "think ahead." The best-grounded conjectures as to the origin of the domestic dog are those which Bartlett based on his knowledge of the habits, as well as the comparative structure, of wolves and foxes gained in the Zoo. His experiments on hybridising the different bovine animals (omitted entirely from this book) proved that the crosses were fertile in many cases, and were a useful contribution to the question of the origin of domestic cattle; and he first saw in the London Zoo what was believed, but not known, earlier—that the young birds of the Australian brush turkey were hatched from the hot mound *fully feathered and able to fly*. This fact has led to much interesting speculation and comparison of the ways in which certain birds which are not hatched by their parents are equipped to shift for themselves.

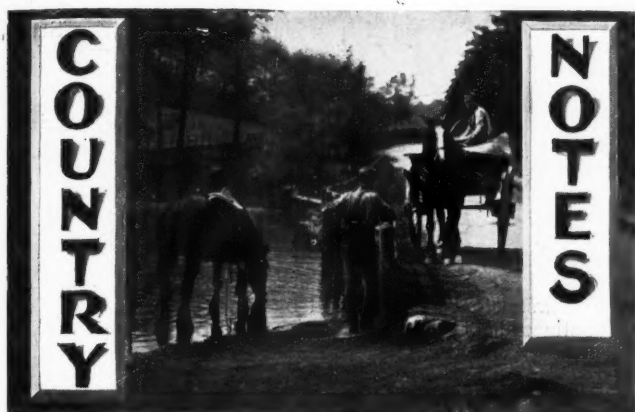
London birds, other than those in the Zoo, attract much more attention than they did when Buckland wrote and Bartlett was in his prime. We do not see that either Bartlett or Mr. Hudson note that for years the old keeper of the Western aviary used to catch wagtails and occasionally other birds on their migration over the gardens, and keep them through the winter; but whether going, or coming, or resident, for one person who knew the "life and conversation" of our feathered citizens and visitors to London twenty years ago, there are now a hundred keen pairs of eyes on the watch.

There was a time when among the commonest birds of the city were the London kites, which ate all the offal on the foreshore; and at the end of the last century the London ravens were well known to keepers in Middlesex, because their feathers were foul with turning over garbage on the dirt heaps outside the city. Mr. Hudson notes that carrion crows are still numerous, and breed in Kensington Gardens, and complains that the keepers disturb the crows because they steal the ducks' eggs, and that the park authorities shoot the wild duck when they grow too numerous. As they are really wild duck, and fly fast and straight, there is no reason why it is worse to shoot them than to kill them in any other way, if killed they must be. But it would perhaps be better to catch and sell the spare birds alive for stocking other waters. Though Mr. Hudson sometimes becomes a little ultra-sentimental over bird-protection in general, public opinion is quite on his side, and so are the London birds themselves. He gives a good instance of this. A nest of nine ducks' eggs was stolen from the parks, "set" in a Hammersmith back-yard, and hatched there. There the ducklings remained till they could fly. A carrion crow, of which there are numbers on the river-side at Hammersmith, flew over the yard. With the instinct of thoroughly wild birds, the whole clutch of young cockney wild ducks sprang into the air and flew off, and were never seen again.

The general conclusions as to the birds of London proper are that three species, the wood-pigeon, moorhen, and dabchick, are increasing steadily, but that most other birds tend to disappear, though very slowly. Want of food is the main reason for this; but as "open spaces" are now looked after with intelligence, food-bearing trees and bird-protecting bushes will doubtless be encouraged. The London sparrow is, we believe, the worst enemy of all London birds, because it devours all the surplus food supply, being omnivorous as well as voracious. Here is an instance from Mr. Bartlett's notes at the Zoo. No grain-eating birds or small animals could be kept in the gardens, except in sparrow-proof cages, unless the sparrows were kept down by constant trapping of the old birds and taking the young to feed the hawks and small carnivora. Grain is on the whole the most abundant bird food in London. If the sparrows, when let alone, would starve the grain-eating birds at the Zoo, we may guess how they *do* starve the few insect-eating birds left in London when they insist on sharing the scanty provision of caterpillars and larvæ. The flycatchers and water-wagtails, which live on gnats and flies which the sparrows cannot catch, alone hold their ground against them. They will even attack and worry rooks feeding on London lawns.

OUR PORTRAIT ILLUSTRATION.

MRS. HENRY TATE is emphatically a lady whose portrait forms an appropriate frontispiece to COUNTRY LIFE; for her deer-stalking record is remarkable. She enjoyed six days' stalking in Caenlochan Forest this year, and killed ten stags in all, getting two, three, and two on the first three days respectively. Her ninth head was magnificent, one of the finest ever seen in that forest. And the forest itself, particularly precipitous and thickly wooded in parts, not only involves arduous work in the stalker, but also calls for close and accurate shooting. Mrs. Tate may be congratulated on a great achievement.



THE death of Lord Lathom, the Queen's faithful servant and personal friend, is inexpressibly sad, for it is beyond question one of those cases in which a man has never rallied from the shock of the sudden and tragic death of his wife. Ever since the fatal carriage accident which caused Lady Lathom's death it has been plain that Lord Lathom had no longer heart or strength to live; that his interest in life was lost. He has been dying slowly ever since, and now the end has come. The world at large, perhaps, hardly realises how great has been the influence of Lord Lathom in his generation. It remembers him as it saw him, that is to say, as a Lord Chamberlain, dignified, firm and tactful, perfect in manner, and, it may be added, of stately form. But Lord Lathom, in a quiet way, exercised strong personal influence, particularly in the distribution of honours. Men whose friends sought titles for them were wont to say that all would go right if Lord Lathom's aid could be secured, and that was true; but only because it was known that Lord Lathom never used his influence unless he was convinced that the case was remarkable and meritorious.

Another great and premature loss is that of Sir George Baden-Powell, a brilliant member of a striking family, who died on Sunday last, having been born in 1847. From St. Paul's and Balliol young Baden-Powell proceeded at once to public life, in which he concerned himself principally with colonial affairs. His name will be associated always with the West Indies, with Bechuanaland, with the Behring Sea business, and with the Paris Arbitration. But busy politician as he was, there was another side of his life. He was devoted to athletic pursuits, he was a keen yachtsman with ideas, he was a big game shot, a mighty hunter. In brief, he was a many-sided Englishman, acute in mind and full of bodily energy and vigour. He will be sorely missed—and he was but 51 years of age; but of those years none were wasted.

Under the title "Diving Elks," the Christmas number of the *Strand Magazine* contains a remarkable and obviously veracious account of the manner in which strange accomplishments can be taught to the most unlikely animals. The elk is not commonly recognised amongst aquatic or intelligent beasts, but Mr. Barnes, of Sioux City, Iowa, has trained two elks to be a joy to successive gatherings of spectators by reason of the "headers" which they will take from a great height into water. Up an inclined plane they trot, and from the platform at the top, 30ft. high or more, they plunge head foremost into a tank of water. The idea came into Mr. Barnes's head from observation of the readiness with which the elks plunged into the Sioux river whenever they got a chance. Here, in connection with the performance, is a fine piece of American writing: "It was necessary, of course, that the elks should make this plunge head first or at an angle, as otherwise they might have been injured by sudden contact with the flat surface of the water after falling from such a height." The British schoolboy could sum up in a word the dive that makes him blush rosy red from throat to knee; but the said schoolboy has not the delicacy of the American.

A correspondent writes: "A first experience of November shooting on the sides of the Wye Valley, in Brecknockshire, suggests one or two observations. I will not trouble you with arithmetical particulars of the birds that were laid low, since that is to me a matter of minor interest. The interesting and delightful feature of the shooting was the sporting character of the shots offered in that beautiful valley. Its sides, thickly clad by trees of uncommon size, and all too full of leaf, rise in sheer and lung-trying steepness from the river level. Prodigious high birds are the rule; and, after shooting in a flat country, one feels as if one were asked to bring down the Pole Star. But down the pheasants come sometimes, and there is more joy in having caused the descent of one of them to earth than in grassing a dozen birds that come flapping into your face. Woodcocks, and an occasional upland snipe, add variety to the bag. So,

sometimes, does Reynard the fox, for he is not hunted in those parts, and he is shot at sight. But it were wise for the Brecknockshire host to inform the stranger within his gates beforehand that vulpecide is locally virtuous."

There is a pleasant savour of the old world in the story of the accidental race between sailing clippers from British shores to the Golden Gate of San Francisco which was reported last week. The *Merioneth*, of Liverpool, left Swansea on the 26th of June; the *Falls of Clyde*, a slightly larger vessel, left London on the 23rd. The voyage from London is 170 miles the longer, so the terms were nearly equal. From London to 'Frisco is, for a steamer, 13,670 miles, for a sailing vessel much more. Yet in the course of this prodigious voyage the vessels spoke one another no less than four times, and when the goal was reached the *Merioneth* was precisely a ship's length ahead of the Glasgow four-master. That was a race indeed, and it is well worthy to be commemorated.

The results of the Freshmen's Sports at Oxford show that the University has one or two good ones among the new men. Mr. L. J. Cornish, late of Merchant Taylors' School and now of Lincoln, showed himself yet again to be the good man, both at the mile and quarter that he has proved before, and also won the long jump. But the best performance of the meeting was the mile race won by Mr. T. Smith—who has come up to Magdalen from Eton—in the fast time, for a freshmen's mile, of 4min. 38sec. Even at this he was no easy winner, Mr. Kinsman, of Queen's and late of Lancing College, finishing within 5yds. of him. The high jumping, as usual of late years, was moderate. Our youth seems to have lost a good deal of its spring since the days of Mr. Brooks. Mr. Greenshields, of Oriel and Winchester, won the hammer-throwing with ease that was rather amusing, with a good throw of 94ft. 10in.

The annual exhibition of the South London Bulldog Club was not only successful, but also significant, in consequence of its being identified with the reunion of bulldog breeders' hearts, for in addition to the South London Club two other societies pledged to the welfare of the bulldog, which have hitherto not been in alliance with each other, were offering prizes and supporting Mr. Cyril Jackson, the judge, who is a prominent member of one of them. This was indeed an auspicious feature in the programme of the show; but unfortunately the good effect of the reconciliation was somewhat minimised by one or two of the awards failing to meet with that unanimous approval of those present which conduces so much to the pleasure of a show. This is greatly to be regretted, for although some of his decisions might not have been generally endorsed, Mr. Jackson is an old and experienced bulldog breeder, who kept these dogs before some of his critics were out of the nursery, and his *bona fides* and impartiality have never been questioned even by his opponents. The fact, however, that the championship of her sex was awarded to Mr. Lloyd's Sister Ivy was no doubt fatal to the harmony of the proceedings, and as she was entered for disposal in the selling class for £15; it scarcely appears that her owner entertained a very high opinion of her value.

Yet Sister Ivy, though a light-weight, is not by any means a bad specimen of her breed, though when he placed her and Mr. Jeffrey's True Type above Mr. Hathaway's Homestead Lady Dockleaf, the judge scarcely acted up to his reputation as an authority. Still, reverses must be expected in connection with dog-showing, as in other forms of sport, and the men who cannot put up with defeats of this kind, and still more so the sympathisers who make bad worse by their unwise and ill-judged criticisms of an unpopular award, would do well to remember how thoroughly a bad loser wears out the patience of his friends. The quality present in the dog classes was certainly superior to that in the other section of the show. Mr. Marfleet securing the championship with Bromley Crib, a really typical brindle of quite the correct stamp, which secured similar honours at the summer show of the Bulldog Club; but Mr. Crabtree's Boomerang, a far heavier dog, made a good fight of it with the crack, and easily disposed of his own brother, Katerfelto, a nice fronted dog, but not quite right behind, when they met in the first class. By far the best of the new comers was Mr. Jeffrey's Rodney Stone, a fifteen months old brindle, which fairly pressed Bromley Crib when they fought out the battle in the under 45lb. class, and when this grand-headed puppy has had time to thicken out, and, in the vernacular of the fancy, has "more of the old man about him," his position very near the top of the first flight is absolutely assured.

There is nearly always an interesting programme at the Baths' Club, in Dover Street, where the swimming-bath is, with its appliances, of almost Roman luxury; but the latest plunging competition there was reduced to something like a fiasco, and yet it was a very interesting fiasco, for it was the remarkable ability of the swimmers that brought the proceedings to an

impasse. The competitors were Mr. Wilson and Mr. Allason both past masters in the art of long plunging, *i.e.*, travelling as far as possible under water with the mere original impetus of the dive. No swimming under water is allowed. The Baths' Club had offered a shield as prize. The bath itself is between 73ft. and 74ft. long. But Mr. Wilson and Mr. Allason, as long plungers, "won't go" into 73ft. or 74ft., as we used to say in the days of sums. Both men plunged the full length of the bath, and were still apparently "full of going" when they touched the further side. So the sum could not be done in this bath, and they will have to go somewhere else to find the answer.

So little is generally understood regarding the expenses connected with rearing young horses, and especially those of the heavier varieties, that the opinions of a practical breeder of Shires will be read with interest. This gentleman asserts that the cost to the owner of an animal belonging to this variety is £58 19s. 6d. by the time it arrives at the age of three years. He calculates the first year as costing £16 15s. 6d; the second, £19 3s.; and the third, £23 1s.; the heaviest item being £12 1s., which he charges for food during the last six months of the period. Included in the cost is the proportion of groom's wages for the three years—£17 5s.—a rather heavy amount certainly; but as nothing is set down for stud fee of sire, veterinary surgeon's bill, insurance, or in fact anything but cost of keep, the total, even were the groom's fee to be reduced, will show that young Shires will have to sell well if they are to pay owners.

The *Yorkshire Post*, that admirably-edited provincial paper which is a storehouse of well-arranged information, reports that the authorities of the Westminster Aquarium propose to hatch some thousands of trout, and, at the proper stage, to deposit them in the Thames. It proceeds: "The result of the experiment will be watched with great interest by metropolitan anglers, who have long been anxious that the question whether the stream is in a fit state for salmon should be put to a practical test." So they have, but if the experiment is to be tried, and to be an experiment, it ought to be tried with salmon. Above locks, as all the angling world knows, there are "great trout," and some very fine specimens are taken. But salmon must be able to get down to the sea and up stream again in due season, else will they perish. Against them is the pollution of the Thames water, which is certainly growing less and less, and the obstacles to their course up and down, which are considerable, but neither insurmountable nor irremovable.

Our old friend, *Thymallus*, the grayling, is misconducting himself in the strangest way this winter. He is always a good friend, filling for us the gap in our fishing year between the close of the trout-fishing, or the autumn salmon-fishing, and the recommencement of legitimate salmon or trout fishing in the spring. But this year he will not take the "red tag." No one who is a grayling-fisher can fail to realise the enormity of this impropriety. It is just like the swordsman in the days of the "grand old manner," who pinked his man with the point in quart, omitting the preliminary point in tierce (we must apologise if we have not the technical terms quite correctly). Hitherto the "red tag," as one, at least, of the flies on the grayling-fisher's cast, has been regarded as *de rigueur*, and we have seen a practised fisherman using three flies, and every one of them a "red tag." And it is not that *Thymallus* is off his feed, or altogether sulky, for he is giving good sport; but everywhere we hear the same complaining, that he will rise to the "blue dun," or to various other flies that are not considered his peculiar fancy, but of the "red tag" he will have none.

Even the little frost that we have as yet felt has brought the sprats in around our coasts—to the joy of those properly cultured persons who know the succulent qualities of this delightful little fish. Only too few do know them. No self-respecting cook or housekeeper would order sprats; they are too cheap, and it would give the fishmonger a bad impression. But if they were not so cheap, if they did not come in such multitudes, they would surely be appreciated as the first delicacies. The herring and the sprat, both so cheap, are perhaps the most highly flavoured of our fish, but the little and good sprat is the better of the two. Who can say how many of him we eat under the name of sardine? And even so he is so "tasty" that we can forgive the fraud.

Australia is to have a "Yellowstone Park," covering some 91,000 acres, in which the indigenous animals of the island continent are to be preserved. This sensible measure is becoming part of the "common form" of Anglo-Saxon communities beyond the seas. Canada has now an immense reserve, the Algonquin Park; part of Table Mountain and two tracts of bush are reserved in Cape Colony; and in Rhodesia and British East Africa a forest sanctuary and the famous elephant swamp are under partial protection. On the Atbara River some such "paradise" will doubtless be established before long. England has at present no national park of this kind, except the New

Forest, where the timber is preserved for ever, as well as the right of entry. Without discouraging the New Forest Stag-hounds, it would be well to add some more effectual protection for British birds and mammals within its borders.

The Australian fauna needs protection badly. Many species, formerly only too common, are almost extinct. Some time ago, when the boxing kangaroo was making a "hit" of a pecuniary kind at the Aquarium, it was found almost impossible to procure more specimens for education. There were only half-a-dozen in the menageries of Europe, and the creature was very rare in Australia.

The first astonishment caused by the odd creatures of this new continent has been almost forgotten, but it was only recently proved that the echidna lays eggs instead of producing young, though black swans and the "duck-billed" platypus cease to excite surprise. To restore the original creatures, as they were when Captain Cook and Sir Joseph Banks first saw a kangaroo, will be no easy matter. The emu is nearly extinct; so is the wolf-like opossum; the duck-bill is very rare. In our Zoo, at the present moment, neither of the two latter animals are to be found.

The steady advance that is being made in the height of harriers and beagles is beginning to arouse apprehensions in the minds of admirers of the last-mentioned little hounds. Many old-fashioned sportsmen who have visited Peterborough Show, which of course is the scene of the annual apotheosis of the hound in all his varieties, have already made the discovery that the harrier is too closely approximating the foxhound, and the beagle the harrier; in fact, that the old delimitations of the respective types are becoming effaced. It is not, therefore, surprising to learn that the men who follow foot beagles are beginning to find that the latter are getting too much pace, and that hunting with them is a matter for pain rather than pleasure. If not followed on foot the beagle becomes a useless hound, for the harrier is in almost every way his superior when horses are used. Hence the remonstrance of the beagle men, who must in their crusade be supported by the sympathies of all who would regret the decadence of an ancient and healthy form of sport.

A correspondent writes:—"In your article on the new village postal delivery you mention the zeal of the Norfolk postmen in the time of flood in Broadland. You may be interested in the following tribute to another Norfolk letter-carrier:—The managers of the Rowland Hill Fund have made a grant of £5 'for long and faithful service' to a blind postman, who for a period of thirty years, accompanied by a dog, carried each morning letters from the sub-post-office at Terrington to St. John's Fen-end and Tinley Fen-end, two remote Norfolk hamlets."

Stories about "various readings" in the marriage service are not uncommon, but these two may be new to some people. There is often something absurd and even cheap in a pauper grandiloquently saying, "With all my worldly goods I thee endow"; but one such person evaded the difficulty and stuck to truth by substituting for the last three words, "I kneel me down." Many men may have been frightened by the words, "from this day forward"; but one man introduced a judicious emendation by substituting the words, "till this day fortnight." A statute of limitation, indeed!

A great compliment is being paid to the efficiency of English coachmen and grooms by the action of the New York Jehus, who are agitating for the suppression of British employés in American stables until they have resided for a period of at least five years in the United States. There is also another question raised by the malcontents, namely, the advisability of granting a licence to all drivers in New York, such licence only to be forthcoming on a man having proved his efficiency. That there is both force and argument in this proposal no one who has seen some of the New York drivers at work will deny, and it is certainly very improbable that the English coachmen, who have been specially engaged by their employers on account of their proficiency, would object to that part of the agitation. On the other hand, there is no doubt that they will resist to the uttermost the suggestion that coachmen should be placed within the provisos of the Foreign Importation of Labour Act, as they have hitherto been regarded as being included in the category of domestic servants to whom it does not apply. The owners of valuable horses and carriages will also doubtless have something to say in the matter, as their faith in the superiority of the British coachmen is proved by their having engaged them, and incurred the great expense of bringing the men over from abroad. At the same time the desirability of insisting upon every driver, whether professional or amateur, who is entrusted with the charge of horses in the public streets being provided with a licence as a proof of his efficiency, is well worth consideration on this side of the Atlantic.

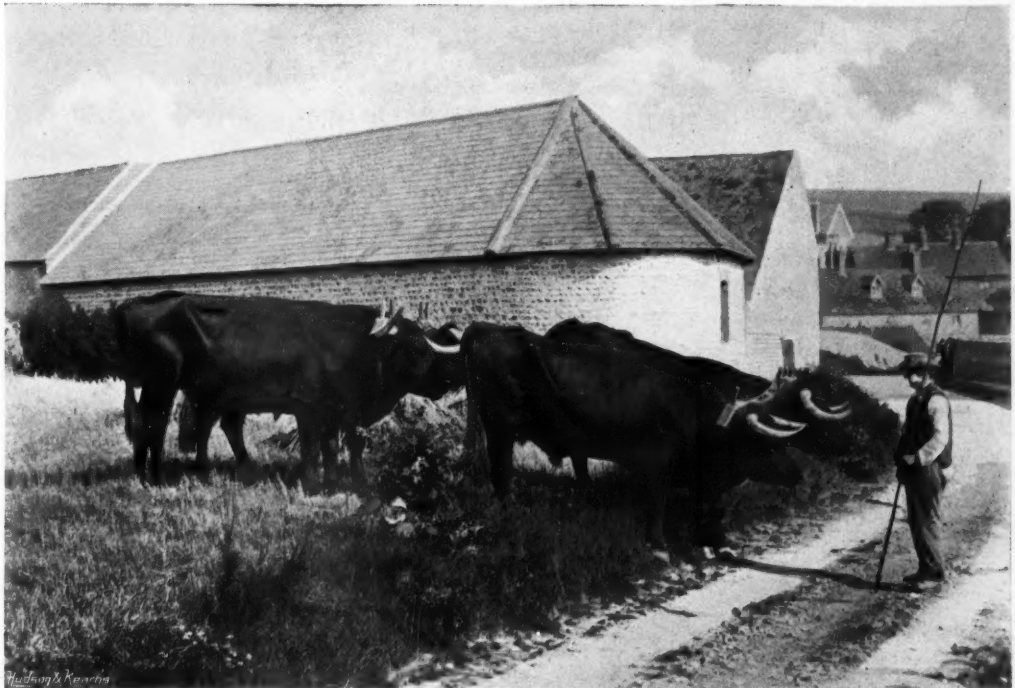
The herring shoals have visited both the Irish and parts of the Eastern Coasts of England in immense numbers this autumn. A shilling for 500 fish seems an impossible price in these days of railways; but fish is still more wasted both in the catching and in the disposal than any form of food. This could be remedied in part by organisation. Meantime, we are still absolutely ignorant of the causes of this sudden abundance of herrings, and equally of the causes of death in the same fishery in other seasons. The Clupeidæ, which number in their ranks the anchovy, the herring, the pilchard, the sprat, the shad, and the "whitebait," whatever those may be, provide more food for man than any other race of fish; and if we really knew the history of any of these from the egg to the adult, we could in a measure control this wonderful source of food, instead of always being over-supplied or under-supplied, and in constant danger of injuring the fishery by some involuntary mistake.

Nothing is known of the cause of herring migrations, yet these are on the most striking and gigantic scale. We do not even know for certain whether the spawn floats or sinks. We do know that *some* herrings shed their roe in November, and that 70,000 eggs are sometimes contained in one fish. Until recently the food of the herring shoals was also unknown. It is now pretty certain that they live on the invisible or microscopic creatures, and the eggs of these creatures, which float in the surface waters. It is also pretty certain that pilchard spawn floats in immense masses on the surface of the sea, just as frog spawn does. It is highly probable that herring spawn does so also. In that case weather and temperature must make a difference to the result; and if there are herring shoals which spawn late in spring as well as the November spawners, the long dry summer of 1896 may have produced the multitudes of herrings of the autumn of 1898.

Draught Oxen on the Sussex Downs.

OXEN, once the beasts of burden in universal use in England, still hold their own in various parts of the country; and though possibly one or two land-owners keep a team from sentiment or a liking for the picturesque, in most districts they are used solely on business principles, and would be exchanged for horses were the latter found to pay better.

Some examples of these handsome beasts have already been given in the pages of *COUNTRY LIFE*. We have shown the famous and ancient breed of the red oxen used in the Weald of Sussex on very stiff, heavy land. There, on ground very like the East Suffolk clays, the red ox does exactly the same work as is done in Suffolk by the chestnut horses. There must be some physical reason why the latter are more suitable for labour in the Eastern Counties than the indigenous red-poll cattle, and we are inclined to believe that it is because the Suffolk clay is "boulder clay" and all the roads are mended with sharp broken flints taken from the fields. These would probably make it impossible to work oxen on them, and as the farms are often great distances from the railway or from large towns, produce could not be transported without the hard-hoofed horses. In Sussex there were formerly hundreds of miles of "green roads," and even the modern macadam in the county is smooth and easy to travel on.



T. Fall,

A DOCILE TEAM.

Baker Street.

We have also given examples of the cattle used for farm-work on the Cotswold Hills and in North Oxfordshire. There the draught oxen are not harnessed after the ancient fashion, with yokes, but wear collars, and pull from the shoulder, like horses, and are driven, not with goads, but with whips. In North Norfolk, on one highly cultivated farm, no other draught animals but bullocks are used—for ploughing, harrowing, drawing



T. Fall,

FOUR YOKE OF OXEN.

Baker Street.

manure, carting hay, and hauling weights—except in the reaping machines at harvest time. This is only because the machines are not fitted with proper harness and attachments for cattle.

Generally speaking, except in the Weald of Sussex, oxen are used on chalk hills and on light land. But though the scene

in which the team of **FOUR YOKE OF OXEN** are resting at noon is on the chalk among the Sussex Downs, the soil is very stiff and lumpy, and difficult to work. The heavy series of four iron rollers has been used to break the clods on the field beyond that on which the team are now standing, and has been dragged off into a piece of rye grass adjoining, where the men can sit down comfortably to eat their dinner and the oxen can have a mouthful of grass. Each pair of steers are yoked together, the bar from which they pull and to which the trace-chains are attached being fastened across their necks to a collar. In some countries the yoke is fastened to the base of the horns; and the ox works, pushing, with lowered head. "Four yoke,"

eight in all, are needed to pull the heavy rollers. In some parts of Sussex the hills are so steep that no animals but cattle can cultivate them. Clumsy though they seem, they are far better at going up and down hill than are horses, and are much less likely to become excited or strain themselves.

OXEN HARROWING shows some lighter work. But it is on heavy sticky soil at the bottom of a valley, and traces of white chalk mud may be seen up to the animals' hocks. It will be noticed that these are very large and powerful black animals, with horns curving forward, rather heavier in build than the indigenous Sussex cattle. They are, in fact, an imported breed, and the fact that it was considered necessary to do this shows what an important part cattle play in the cultivation of this county. When the cattle plague almost destroyed the herds of Sussex, it would have been easy to replace the working oxen by

horses. The recent disaster gave very good grounds for using fewer cattle and supplying their place by creatures not liable to pestilence. But the farmers judged that the ox was indispensable, and obtained a fresh supply from Wales. They were much cheaper than the Sussex breed, very hardy—the cows

sometimes stay out in the snow on the hills, and are there milked by cold-defying Welsh milkmaids—and they do not require to be shod, which the native animals did. They are broken in at about two years old, and are worked for from six to eight years. By this time they have grown to a size quite incredible by people who only see "store cattle," which are always slaughtered when young, because otherwise they would "eat their heads off." They work and grow, and at the end of seven or eight years are easily fattened. First, they are turned out to recover from work, and a little later they are fattened in the yard with oil-cake. They then weigh from 150st. to 200st., and sell for high prices. Some fetch as much as £45. One

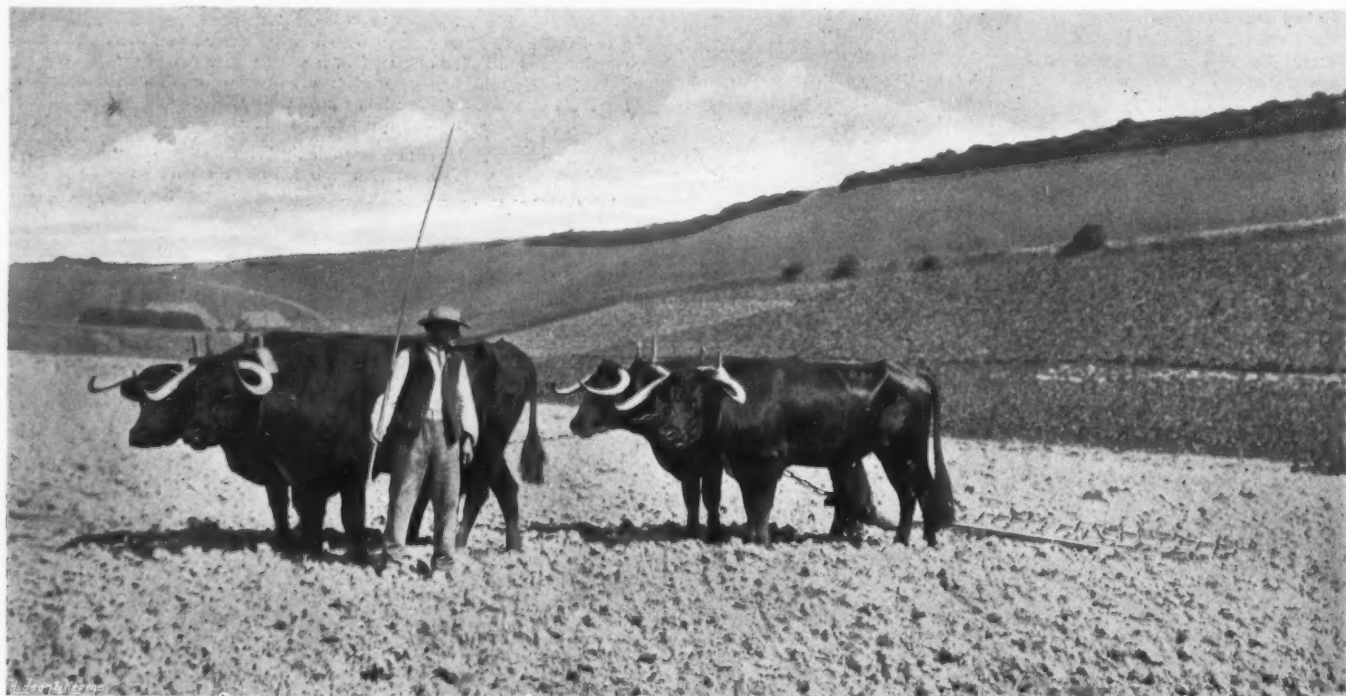
farmer recently sent eight to market, and received an average of 42 guineas for them. When at work they are by no means stupid, and quite as obedient to the voice as most horses. They will stop instantly on the order being given, and start also at the driver's order.

A DOCILE TEAM shows two yoke, which were walking from a grass field on to the road. When the leaders were just stepping on to the path, the word to halt was given, and all four of the big beasts stopped instantly.

It should be added that the farm on which these views were taken was in the highest state of cultivation, and had the oxen been in any way not up to their work they would have been replaced by more "modern" methods. We add a view of a very ancient process, **OXEN TREADING OUT THE CORN**, taken, not in Sussex, but in Asia Minor.



OXEN TREADING OUT THE CORN.



7. Fall,

OXEN HARROWING ON THE SOUTH DOWNS.

Baker Street.

ON THE GREEN.

APPARENTLY the example of Mr. de Zoete in winning the medal at St. Andrews has had a stimulating effect on the golf at Cambridge University. Mr. Leathart, the ex-captain, is, at all events, in remarkably good form. He won the Linskill Cup with a score that was highly respectable, and followed up that victory by winning the Barrow medal with a score of 73, that has never been equalled. The competition was against Bogey, and the unfortunate Bogey had to submit to a beating by no less than six holes, probably a more severe experience than he has ever before suffered in the whole course of his evil career. Mr. Leathart played on level terms with Bogey; equal second to him were Mr. G. H. Hardie, who finished two holes up, with four strokes allowed, and Mr. H. M. Smith, with nine allowed. At

Ascot the Oxford team were at their old tactics, scoring heavily at the tail end of the list, Mr. G. H. Rowe and Mr. W. E. Thompson winning six holes and five respectively. Mr. R. H. Mitchell, for Ascot, gained five holes from Mr. H. C. Ellis, and Major Kinloch took four from the Mr. F. H. Mitchell who is still at Oxford; but Mr. Hunter, Mr. de Montmorency, and Mr. Horne were all winners for the University, and their side won by twenty-three holes to twelve.

Mr. Arthur Balfour no doubt expressed the general sentiments of golfers in his opening speech at the Dorset Golf Club. He does not want golfers to increase, except for their own felicity, because there are more than enough already—especially at St. Andrews and North Berwick in the crowded times.

Apparently the new course, on which Lord Wimborne has spent so much pains and money, is to be a good one. Mr. Balfour speaks of it as "one of the best inland courses he has played on"; and his utterances in this regard have not been so discredited as those of a certain popular professional, concerning whom it was propounded as a conundrum to "mention any inland green of which T—D— had not said that it was the best inland course he knew." We may take it that the course at Broadstone is really a good one. It had been arranged that Taylor and Braid were to play a thirty-six hole single match, and if any took the trouble to go from a distance to see that match they must have been not a little disappointed when it was altered to a foursome in which Mr. Balfour, with Taylor, opposed Mr. John Penn and Braid. One does not know, of course, with what great confidence Taylor may have been playing after his famous victory over Vardon at West Bromwich; but even supposing that he has a little the pull of Braid—which Braid, at least, would certainly not allow—Mr. Penn has surely a bigger pull over Mr. Balfour. And yet Mr. Balfour and Taylor won, by four up and three to play.

Vardon has been beaten so seldom during the past season, that any overthrow

he receives is notable. The match between him and Taylor was fairly fought out. In the outgoing of each round Vardon had the better of the play, but the home-coming did not seem to suit him at all, and Taylor beat him by three up and two to play, after being four up at the luncheon interval.

Although Mr. Leathart was in such great form at Cambridge, he could not hold his own at all at Blackheath with Mr. F. Ireland. He was defeated by eight holes on the twenty-one played, but Mr. Ireland, especially at Blackheath, is very strong. Mr. J. L. Low would appear to have been playing as second string in the team, of which such a player as Mr. Robert Whyte brought up the rear—a powerful testimony to the side's golfing ability. Mr. Low was also rather too much for his opponent, Mr. A. C. Lawrence, and had an advantage of six holes. Mr. Pell, most unfortunately, was unwell, and had to retire after seven holes had been played, leaving all the rest to be scored against him, but even so the University could not pull off the match.

At Chingford, on the course of the Royal Epping Forest Club, Bogey yet again was beaten—by Mr. Alfred Kemp, with a score of three up. No doubt it is the still grey weather of this November that gives golfers so good a chance.

THE ANGLESEY HUNT WEEK.

THESE lines are a pendant to a picture representing the procession which is an essential feature of the time-honoured festivities and ceremonial which have been held at Beaumaris in connection with the Anglesey Hunt almost from time immemorial. To all such rural ceremonials a curious and almost pathetic interest is attached. Go where you will in England or Wales you will find that a great change has come over the social life of every county town. Some are industrial centres, others are silent and tranquil. In each case they have lost a part of the life that once was theirs, for railways have put an end for ever to a wholesome social practice which once prevailed among the "county" people. They no longer keep their town houses in the county town; they no longer celebrate their "season" in their own county. The attractions of London, which most of them can reach now in about the same time which was consumed formerly in travelling in the family carriage from the Hall to the county town, are too much.

The change, it may be, has not been all for good, but it was inevitable, and we must make the best of it. Still, such survivals as the Anglesey Hunt are interesting, for, although the hounds are but harriers, since there are no foxes in Anglesey, the processions, the steeplechases, "to be ridden by gentlemen who have never ridden for hire," the "ordinaries," and the balls, do serve to knit together the Society of the district; and to this day, in many a country house in North Wales ladies look back with interest to the day when they were Lady Patronesses at Beaumaris, and many a girl looks forward to the Beaumaris Hunt as the occasion of her "coming out."

The festivities are traditional. Minutes of the Hunt go back to 1757, but there is no evidence that the meeting of that year was the first. It was a modest affair. Twenty-five subscribers contributed a crown apiece, and the total cost of the festivities was £4 18s. 6d. But, we doubt not, it was hearty and convivial. Moreover, the names of the Comptrollers and Lady Patronesses in early days are names still familiar in the Society of North Wales. This year the Comptroller was Mr. Eric Platt, son of the well-known Colonel Henry Platt, C.B., of Gorddinog, and the Lady Patroness was Miss Pritchard Rayner, daughter of Captain Pritchard Rayner, of Trescawen, who was Comptroller in 1872. In like manner Mr. R. G. V. Duff, the Deputy Comptroller, is the son of Captain C. G. Duff, who was Comptroller in 1878.

And the Hunt this year was a great success. The Wednesday was devoted to steeplechasing; Tuesday and Thursday to hare-hunting. And on the first day there was a memorable run, ending in the hare's taking to the sea for 45min., when he was rescued, and, most mercifully and properly, respited to run another day. On Wednesday was held the "Ladies' Ordinary," on Thursday the "Gentlemen's Ordinary." On Tuesday and Thursday there were balls at Beaumaris. All these festivities were hearty and full of social enjoyment, and



J. Wickens.

THE HUNT PROCESSION.

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the survey of them compels the aspiration, "Long live the Anglesey Hunt." And now, after the fever of gaiety, Beaumaris is at peace. One half of its small Society calls on the other half in the morning; the second half returns the call in the afternoon. Cranford itself was never more peaceful.



THE fact that the first of the three leading annual exhibitions of fat cattle has come and gone, must convince our readers that, in spite of the extraordinary mildness of the season, Christmas is again at hand. The excellence of the Norwich Show, which terminated last week, moreover provides a source of much satisfaction not only to feeders of stock, but to agriculturists generally, though all the frequenters of the Norfolk fixture deplored most deeply the absence from the scene of the late Mr. J. J. Colman, who had for many years been a most generous supporter of the show. The loss of so staunch a patron was, indeed, accentuated by the fact that the championship for the best beast present fell to the cross-bred heifer May, which last year won first at Birmingham, and is now exhibited by his executors. What the fate of May may be if she appears again at Bingley Hall this week, or at Islington later on, it is difficult to guess, but opinions are unanimous that she has come on a lot; and as, in addition to the possession of marvellous symmetry, the daughter of Ringleader scales close on 17cwt. at thirty-two months old, it will be realised that with luck she will be a difficult nut for the best beasts of the day to crack. The cup for the best ox or steer in the show fell to Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild's roan shorthorn Cameronian, a nice level beast, which was placed reserve to May for the championship. He was, however, easily beaten by her, and it may be added that, though two months older, he scaled nearly 3st. less.

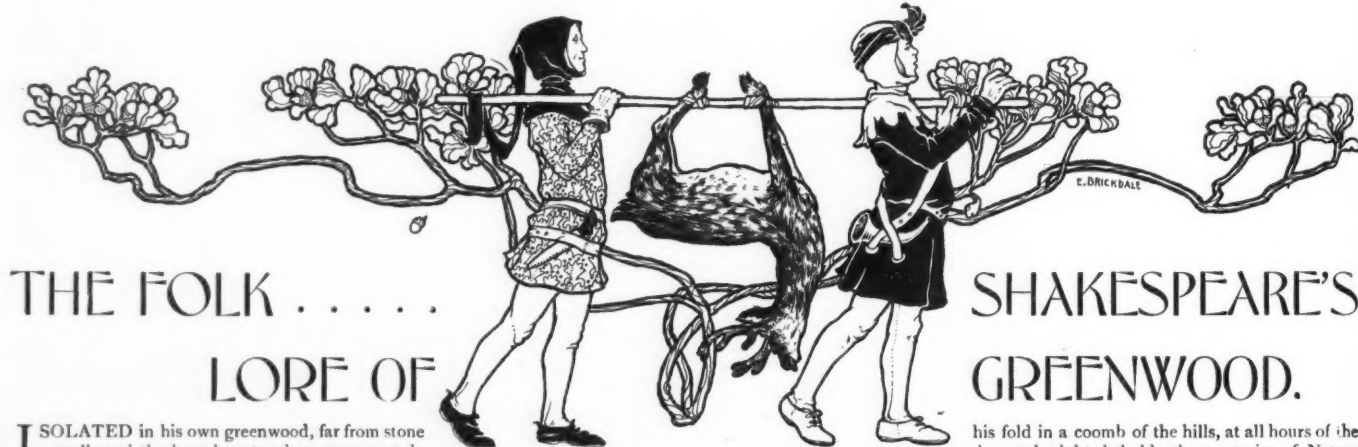
As is usual at Norwich, the red-polls were one of the strongest features of the show, the late Mr. J. J. Colman's executors being again well to the fore, as they captured the breed cup with the well-grown level Prince, which is of the same age as the champion May, and weighs 3lb. more; whilst Armlet won in the cow class, H.R.H. the Duke of York's exhibit in the steer class being passed unnoticed. The shorthorns were a very good lot, Cameronian, already referred to, of course sweeping the board so far as prizes in this section were concerned, another representative of the Waddesdon herd—Foot Boy—being second to him in the steer class. In shorthorn cows Mr. Learner won with the Scottish-bred Silence, which at thirty-three months old scales 16cwt. 1qr. 21b., and is a most shapely, level beast, being subsequently placed reserve to May in the competition for the cup offered for the best cow or heifer in the show. Second prize in this class went to Her Majesty's lengthy, well-fed Nerissa, whilst the Prince of Wales gained a commendation. The steers of any other pure breed between two and three years old were headed by an Aberdeen Angus, exhibited by Colonel W. N. Tufnell, which was placed third at the Smithfield Show last year; the same exhibitor scoring in the succeeding class with Lord Monken, another black-poll. In the cross-bred steers Mr. Colman's executors were again in front with the red and white shorthorn-Aberdeen Angus, Master Harbinger, a thirty-five months old beast which scales 19cwt. 0qr. 26lb., and is so full of quality that he made matters difficult for Cameronian when they met to decide which was to take the cup for the best steer. The classes for small cattle were well filled, the excellent beef-producing qualities of the Kerry and the Dexter

being fully appreciated in East Anglia; and here in the steers Mr. Le Neve's Little—pedigree unknown—beat Mr. Radcliff's red and a smart Dexter Kerry which won the reserve for the Prince of Wales; Sir Walter Gilbey winning in the heifers with a black Dexter Kerry.

The sheep classes were rather a disappointment to the supporters of Norwich Show, but H.R.H. the Prince of Wales won in the class for Southdown wethers under twenty-three months old with a capital trio, scaling 5cwt. 2qr., Mr. Colman's executors and Earl Cadogan securing the next highest honours. The Prince's flock was again to the fore in the class for pens of short-woolled ewes, the representatives of Mr. Harry McCalmont, M.P., being second; whilst Mr. Colman's executors just defeated a fine pen of the Prince of Wales in the lambs.

The Earl of Ellesmere had matters pretty much his own way in the short-woolled lambs other than Southdowns, and then came Mr. T. Rush's turn, as he won in the long-woolled classes and cross-bred lambs, his exhibits between them securing the championship of the sheep section and all the special cups.

The pig classes are never a great feature of Norwich Shows, and this year proved no exception to the rule, but still there was quality to be found amongst the exhibits, Mr. R. Graham taking the championship for his pen of Berkshires, which had beaten Mr. Garrett Taylor's Tamworths in their class. The best pen of any other breed was Mr. W. Mitchell's Large White Yorkshires, which took reserve for the championship; whilst H.R.H. the Prince of Wales secured premier honours in the under six months old class with cross-breds.



ISOLATED in his own greenwood, far from stone walls and the busy haunts where men most do congregate, the peasant of leafy Warwickshire is essentially prone to a belief in moods, marks, signs, and other outward observances of Nature and humanity, and treasures up with a quite picturesque conviction—with a faith worthy, perhaps, of a better cause—the heirlooms of folk-lore which have devolved upon him from lygone generations.

If a Warwickshire farmer, a native to the soil, were in need of a new horse, and made his want known among those with horses to sell, and if accordingly a fine black horse with one white foot were brought for his inspection, his eye would at once alight upon the white foot, and he would be sure to shake his head and say, in the time-honoured language of his county:

"One white foot is bad, and two are too many,
That horse is best that does not have any."

This is one example of the folk-lore of Shakespeare's greenwood, an influence which is as tenacious of life in the mind of the Warwickshire countryman as is the idiom of his own tongue. All the signs, small and great, that are to be seen in cottage, field, and woodland of this classic county are made a note of by the dwellers therein and turned to use in their everyday life.

Anyone who moves among the inhabitants of this neighbourhood when in the open will be surprised and interested at the many quaint observances and feelings of the so-called "common people." The people, indeed, may be both unrefined and unlettered, and common in the sense that they work and live by the sweat of their brow and are by no means fastidious in the matter of dress, but their way of looking at things, and their manner of doing them, are without question, uncommon, if not both curious and poetical.

The small pipings of the robin, which would probably have no effect whatever upon the average townsman, are full of omen to the Warwickshire peasant when driving his team of horses merrily afield. He reads the song in this wise. If the robin sings in the morning, it will be sure to rain before night; if, on the contrary, the pensive little fellow pipes at sundown, it will be a fine day on the morrow.

To the country dweller of Warwickshire the robin is both sacred and melancholy. The most uncultured of rural clowns will hesitate to do harm to the bird with ruby breast; and I have even known rustic boys (with the true seeds of religious feeling so common to dwellers in this famous greenwood growing up within them) to deny themselves, when on their birds'-nesting expeditions, the attraction of taking one single egg from the nest of the robin. The reason for this solicitude is that the robin is God's bird with them. In their simple faith the robin was the attendant of Jesus at His crucifixion, and crimsoned its breast in ministering to His needs. Thus the robin (with the wren) is a sacred bird, the peasant feeling finding expression in the quaint couplet so frequently heard in the mouth of child and adult:

"The robin and the wren
Are God's cock and hen."

Having in view the traditional ministrations of the robin, it is quite in accord with the circumstances of the case that the peasants of Shakespeare's greenwood should regard it as a melancholy bird. Its duties at the Cross, and the scenes it saw there, were of a character to sadden its whole life, and so with them it is the bird of sorrow. The influence of Shakespeare may have something to do with the holding of this popular belief, for the immortal poet himself addresses to the robin the question:

"How now, sweet robin, art thou melancholy?"

As they that go down to the sea in ships and occupy their business in great waters see the wonders of Nature in the deep, so the shepherd who goes down to

SHAKESPEARE'S GREENWOOD.

his fold in a coomb of the hills, at all hours of the day and night, beholds the mysteries of Nature on land. The shepherd of this greenwood is as full of folk-lore of all kinds as a good ear of wheat is full of grain. His glance at the sky is the glance of a reading man; it is his book in which he reads the signs which portend good or ill to his flocks and herds.

The ancient pastoral jingle, recited by rustics in every village of woody Warwickshire when the signs appear,

"A red sky in the morning
Is the shepherd's warning,
A red sky at night
Is the shepherd's delight,"

is the veritable gospel of the keeper of sheep in this neighbourhood. A burning red flush arching the sky in the morning of an early spring day will prevent the shepherd from tarrying over creature comforts; and not until his young lambs are well under cover in the red barn, or he has lent a hand in spreading the tar-cloths over the unsheltered wheat ricks, will he be induced to return to breakfast. But a similar scarlet flush at night, covering the top of the coomb like a rosy canopy, will take him leisurely on his homeward way; for, in his familiar belief, that red evening sign surely foretells a bright day for him on the morrow, and there is no need for him to be anxious now.

If those morning and evening sky-signs are sometimes lacking in their appearance, the faith in his own flock, as a barometer of the workings of Nature, is always present in the mind of the man of fleece. He reads their movements and moods as he studies the lights and shadows of the sky, and has an abiding conviction of their truth. In the words of the Warwickshire weather seer:

"When sheep do huddle by tree and bush,
Bad weather is coming with wind and slush,"

and when the shepherd of Shakespeare's greenwood observes his flock huddling together under tree or hedge, he at once accepts the sign and takes his measures accordingly, never for a moment doubting the accuracy of his fleecy barometer.

The folk-lore, indeed, pertaining to atmospheric changes in leafy Warwickshire is of a very full and quaint character. This is no doubt accounted for by the fact that the bulk of the people in the entirely rural districts are field-workers, are out in the open late and early and in all seasons of the year, and thus take note of the natural signs that appear in sky and on landscape, which have gone some way towards founding a literature of their own—mostly a literature of simple and homely rhymes.

"If it rains before seven,
'Twill be fine before eleven,"

is a prophecy which the true-grown native would never think of disbelieving, though it is not always realised by the actual turn of events. Another popular belief in the same category is, that if it rains all morning and stops before twelve the rest of the day will be fine; if, on the other hand, rain begins to fall just after noon, then the whole of the rest of the day will be wet. This latter fore-token, as it is called, is regarded as quite infallible by the peasantry of this greenwood, who will confidently resume work again if the rain ceases at a little past twelve, and forego their labour if it begins at that time.

Perhaps the most curious evidences of the union which exists between subjects of natural and human life in the rural districts of Warwickshire are to be found in connection with the folk-lore of bees. Shakespeare's greenwood has for a long time been known as a prolific honey-producing district. Few gardens of the scattered cots in village or hamlet are to be seen without at least one hive of bees, and there was one which, to my own knowledge, contained more than one hundred hives. Many of the hives are home-made (the work of the ingenious hands of

the rustic), and of the quaintest designs as well as the most ambitious, two I once saw in a garden of old-fashioned flowers being made of pure white oyster-shells and exact reproductions of the famous Warwick Castle.

What charm or influence bees have upon the affairs of the human family is a subject as interesting as it seems obscure, though there is no doubt or obscurity about the fact that no prudent cottager of leafy Warwickshire ever omits to take his bees into his confidence. The small honey-gatherers, indeed, in spite of their minute size in comparison with the size of their keepers, exercise quite a despotic power over them. They insist upon being "told" everything, and there is a popular belief that if the bees are not informed of all the leading occurrences in the family, some visitations of ill-luck are sure to follow. Thus the business of "telling the bees" of any important event happening in the homestead is never forgotten or dreamt of being omitted. The bees must be told of a birth, marriage, departure, return, or death of any member of the keeper's family, and then all goes well; but let this ceremony be once omitted, from forgetfulness, neglect, or design, then a penalty in some form or other will have to be paid. Such is the steadfast faith of the Warwickshire rustic, who, to avoid the penalty following omission, tells his bees everything.

In addition to the folk-lore of the bee may be mentioned the firmly-established belief among the peasantry of this neighbourhood that at twelve o'clock on Christmas morning the bees may be heard singing songs of praise in their hives; and in their simple faith in this legend the rustics of village and hamlet at the mystic hour of twelve may be seen going to the different hives "to hear the bees sing their Christmas carols." This idea is as pretty as it is romantic, and is quite worthy of the countrymen of the great delineator of human and natural life who "exhausted worlds and then imagined new."

In regard to the swarming of bees there is a very popular rhyming augury in use in all the villages of leafy Warwickshire, in which the values of the different months of the year in which the swarms occur are faithfully laid down, (and faithfully believed in), in the following manner:

"A swarm of bees in May
Is worth a load of hay;
A swarm of bees in June
Is worth a silver spoon;
A swarm of bees in July
Is not worth a butterfly."

The influence of these prognostications is seen in the interest shown by country dwellers when their bees swarm in May, whereas later swarms, worth, according to the lore of the subject, but a silver spoon and a butterfly, occasion only a mild enthusiasm among the occupants of cottage and farmstead.

As a finish to these brief examples of the folk-lore attaching to bees existent in the Warwickshire greenwood (a few only out of many belonging to the subject), I may mention that in connection with the ceremony of "telling the bees" there is one belief held more strongly than many others, and that is that if, when the master of the house dies, the bees are not told of the event, they will leave the hives in a body and go right away.

A very curious open-air practice, still widely prevalent among the older inhabitants of village and hamlet in out-of-the-way places of this neighbourhood, is the catching of falling rain on Ascension Day. This practice was observed by almost all the natives in the days when home-made bread was the rule in every village home, and to-day, in those cottages where bread is still made and baked at home, the rain-water which fell on Ascension Day is brought out for use. The popular belief is that rain falling upon this day, if caught and bottled, and used with the leaven (a teaspoonful at a time), is a sure preventive against "heavy bread." Accordingly whenever it happens to rain upon that auspicious occasion, vessels are held out, the rain is caught and bottled, and used as circumstances may require, in the full and firm conviction that it possesses the virtue popularly ascribed to it, that of turning the "heavy" bread into "light" bread.

Observing the moods, signs, and aspects of Nature in solitary places enabled the peasants of Shakespeare's greenwood in bygone days to frame many of the old fore-tokens and beliefs which have now such a strong hold upon the occupants of the dab-and-wattle and thatched roof cottages of village and hamlet. The many prophecies concerning the bursting of the leaf are still implicitly believed in, that one having reference to the ash and the oak being now, through years of time and observance, quite a proverb in the belief of every rural dweller.

In woody Warwickshire there appear to be two versions of the prognostication. Both are in rhyme, both are in extensive use, and yet, strange to relate, each seems to give quite a different prophecy in regard to the leaves of the ash preceding those of the oak. The one most chiefly used runs as follows:

"If the oak comes out before the ash,
We shall have a summer of splash;
If the ash comes out before the oak,
We shall have a summer of smoke."

A summer of smoke means to the native a hot, dry summer, with steaming pastures in the morning and smoking herbage during the day; which reads strangely when read side by side with the other prophecy:

"If the oak comes out before the ash,
We shall have but a little splash;
If the ash comes out before the oak,
We shall have a downright soak."

A downright soak seems to signify a summer of rain rather than a summer of smoke; but this latter prognostication is the older of the two, and the experience of modern country-folk goes to show that atmospheric changes have reversed the order of the proverbs, and that now, when the leafage of the ash precedes that of the oak, a hot, dry summer (a summer of smoke) is the invariable result.

The folk-lore prevalent in Shakespeare's greenwood relating to or connected with the moon, is both extensive and interesting. There is first of all a steadfast belief that the wise woman of the village (and nearly every collection of domiciles which can claim the dignity and title of village or hamlet has its wise woman) culls her simples by the light of the moon, otherwise no virtue attaches to them. The peasant maiden, too, when sowing the fern-seed which she gathered on Midsummer Day for her love-charm, must sow the seed by moon-light, and repeat as she scatters it,

"Fern-seed I sow, fern-seed I hoe,
In hopes my true love will come after me and mow,"

or else she will not attain her heart's desire.

In all matters relating to the moon the greatest good follows the doing of the correct thing. When the first new moon of the year appears, it is the correct thing for every countryman of leafy Warwickshire, when seeing it for the first time, to bow to it nine times to secure good luck for the year. The men folk have to bow 108 times during the year, and the women folk have to curtsy the same number of times; for the first new moon of each lunar month exacts nine bows and nine curtesies from each man and each woman as the homage to be paid for the good luck which this moon-worship is believed to give. It is also a common practice to turn the money in the pocket when each succeeding new moon is seen for the first time.

One of the surest signs of fair weather in the belief of the Warwickshire rustic is connected with the appearance of the moon—with its position. When the moon sits perfectly stagnant in the sky, with its horns pointing upward, when, as Martin Poyser says in "Adam Bede" (chapter xviii., page 159), it "lies like a boat," there is never likely to be any rain for some little time. "There's many sines as is false," says Poyser, "but that's sure"; and certainly the peasants of Shakespeare's greenwood have an invincible faith in that sign. The prognostication for rain among the dwellers of this woodland is when the crescent moon stands nearly upright in the sky, when, in fact, the boat figure is reversed. It is then believed that the moon is so tilted that the rain will run out at the horns.

In spots so far from the madding crowd as some of the isolated little villages and hamlets of rural Warwickshire, it is but natural that among birds the magpie, "the Mag," as it is called by the rustics, should be a famous augur. The rooks talk amid the undulations, and go to school in the basins of the landscapes; but "the Mag" is far more knowing than the rook, and it must be confessed that the peasants of this greenwood, if not a little afraid of him, are at least always anxious to conciliate him.

There is a strange belief among these people that the magpie was the only bird, out of all the birds of the air, who refused to enter the Ark of Noah, preferring to perch upon the roof and enjoy the weird sights of the Deluge. Hence "the Mag" is a curious bird, has a talent for spying out things, and is believed to have the power of inflicting sorrow upon those who behold it singly, and good luck when seen in twos, threes, and fours; after the manner of the rhymed omen:

"One magpie means sorrow; two mirth;
Three a wedding; and four a birth."

To evade the sorrow when one magpie only is seen, the rustic must raise his hat or cap to it, or cross himself, and all goes well; if he omits to do these things ill-luck will surely come to him. The sight of the other numbers is always welcome; for mirth, a wedding, and a birth are considered by the country dwellers some of the best things promised to them by the folk-lore of Shakespeare's greenwood.

GEORGE MORLEY.



WE lately wrote of the beautiful wild and hybrid water-lilies which colour pond and lake surface with flowers of wondrous hue, but another phase of water-gardening remains, enriching lake and stream side with plants from our own and other lands. By still and running water many beautiful plants are happy—if not actually in water, at least in the wet soil by the side, where from early spring days until the autumn a hundred cherished moisture-loving flowers run riot.

Unfortunately flower gardeners until recent years seemed to have given little thought to the lake as a place for flowers, and in our day not a few public parks and gardens teach the lesson, that creating artificial edgings to water is the best way to show how ugly and common-place a garden may be made when flint, stones, cement, and similar materials take the place of precious flowers. This is indeed strange. Surely our brookside tells a different story. As it meanders through lush meadows it kisses dainty flowers from the earliest spring days; the water forget-me-not, blue as a summer sky, reflected in its clear surface, the marsh marigold, like a golden sheen in the bright sun, lady's smock and rush, even primrose, love the cool brookside, and make a garden indeed, until in early summer our English iris sends up its spires of yellow flowers as beautiful as those of any iris that sunny Japan has sent us; or may be the great spearwort has established itself—a tall buttercup of greater beauty than any of its race. It is the fashion however in many gardens and

parks to make a formal edging to the water, and in one park an ugly black flint has been used, whilst it is not unusual to see burrs and cement, of course making flower-life impossible, even though one might desire it. Strange indeed, as we have said, is this desire for flint and cement, which unhappily our private gardens are not innocent of. There is no excuse or need for these stony margins. If fringes of flowers are not desired, simple grass slopes or plants boldly grouped are beautiful also; many noble perennials enjoy their feet almost in water. In visiting gardens of recent years we have seen barrenness where there should be beauty and interest varying with the year's seasons, and this is not, we think, due to any relish for cement and brick, but to a want of knowledge of the great world of moisture-loving flowers—a sealed book, so to say, to the maker of the garden.

We must bring the beauty of the native brook into the garden, and we can manage this without introducing weeds. Many native flowers are of surpassing beauty. The buckbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*), common in most streams, is a fair flower, as delicate as apple-blossom in colour, and tall in growth. The lovely water forget-me-not (*Myosotis palustris*) should be established wherever possible. One never tires of its fleets of blue flowers, and it grows freely in wet soils, if the garden does not possess a stream or lake side. The yellow flowers of *Villarsia nymphaeoides*, the rosy colour of the flowering rush (*Butomus umbellatus*), and the dainty hue of the arrowhead, are welcome in all water. Remember also the sweet flag and its variegated variety (*Acorus Calamus*), the water plantains, the curious little frog-bit (*Hydrocharis*), and water soldier (*Stratiotes*), or the delicate water-violet (*Hottonia*). Bladderworts and crowfoots, yellow iris, and plants that scarcely relish actual contact with water, but delight in the wet soil by the side, are available to gladden the stream or lake bank. If the space is small it is well to establish a few things only, and reject all of coarse and unruly growth, not considering their flower beauty.

A host of plants may be used by the water-side, and of these the Japanese iris (*I. Kämpferi*) is as varied in its colouring as



A STREAMSIDE IN BARR'S NURSERY.

any flower from other countries. We have given illustrations of iris-fringed ponds and streams, and those from photographs taken in Mr. Wilson's garden at Wisley, where this iris has been established for many years, show the beauty of aquatic gardening. We revel in this glorious manifestation of a vigorous group which must have moisture to succeed, and gives to English gardens colour and variety. In Japan the waters are fringed with this plant, an iris the Japanese have used with artistic effect. There is no reason why iris-margined streams should not exist in Britain, as we know from these few illustrations. We have seen that planting in rich, moist soil is alone necessary to ensure a brilliant flower festival in midsummer. The Siberian iris rejoices also in wet places and flowers a few weeks before the Japanese kind, whilst in the Southern Counties the handsome Nile lily, or *Calla æthiopica*, increases freely, notwithstanding sharp frosts, if planted 2ft. or so beneath the surface of the water. A pond or lake margined with this bold plant gains in effectiveness and interest. Its noble leaves and big white spathes are familiar in pots, but their beauty is of a higher order when seen clustering thickly in the open garden.

Many plants, seldom thought of when planting lake margins, are beautiful thus used. Bold groups of the gunnera or rheum, dipping almost to the water's edge, are never better placed than in this position, their splendid leafage reflected in the clear surface. We saw this in the illustrations of the water garden at Tangle Manor. It is not foliage alone that should be grouped by the lakeside, but plants to form a flowery fringe, a sea of colour when they burst into bloom in their appointed season. The loosestrife (*Lythrum Salicaria*) makes beautiful many a natural streamside. It veils in colour the upper back-waters of the Thames, and suggests that in the garden a flower so willowy and vigorous should be used with moderation, substituting for the graceful wilding the richer-coloured form known as *Roseum superbum*. The beautiful family of globe-flowers (*Trollius*) is never so fine as by water—not actually touching it, but planted in moist soil by its edge—and groups may be formed of the flame-flower (*Tritoma Uvaria*), the varied *Primula japonica*,



A POND GARDEN.

never happier than in partial shade, near, perhaps, some willow casting its shadow over the primrose, where, too, the graceful Solomon's Seal will grow into leafy groups. Day-lilies and German irises relish moisture, and we are pleased to see that in the Royal Gardens at Kew, by the large lake in the lower grounds, this grouping of plants on the grass is carried out successfully. Seen through the trees near, the massing of flame-flower is a glorious picture in September, when the starworts toss their willowy flower-stems in the cool winds. Remember also that the phlox, unhappy indeed in the border in this year of drought, is full of vigour near the water. It is a moisture-loving plant, but few realise that moisture is necessary if bold heads of flowers and healthy leafage are desired.

The lakeside may in truth be a garden of flowers, grouped on its banks or by the water's edge, to spread, perhaps, to where the nymphæas bask in the sunlight. Keep the vigorous plants away from the more delicate kinds. The giant knotweed and gunnera are scarcely suitable companions for a colony of Japanese primroses or the globe-flowers. With a good foundation in the way of a carefully-prepared rich soil and proper position, failures should be unknown. As the late autumn and winter are seasons of preparation and work, we bring this delightful phase of gardening before our readers. The following is a list of the plants from which a selection may be made:—

PLANTS FOR LAKE BANKS.

Day-lilies (*Heimerocallis*). These like shade.
Phloxes of self colours.
Irises—Kämpferi, Siberian, English, and German.
Gunnera scabra and *G. manicata*.
Asters, perennial.
Lilium superbum (American swamp lily).
Rheum (large-leaved rhubarb).
Lythrum Salicaria (loosestrife) and varieties.
Equisetum Telmateia (giant horsetail), a very vigorous plant.
Ferula.
Ferns, especially *Struthiopteris* and Royal fern (*Osmunda*).
Caltha (marsh marigolds).
Ranunculus Lingua (great spearwort).
Trollius (globe-flowers).
Primula japonica (Japanese primrose).
Epilobium angustifolium and *E. hirsutum* (willow herbs).
Arundo Donax (great reed grass).
Arundo conspicua (New Zealand reed grass).
Arundo Phragmites (common reed).
Elymus (lyme grass).
Sea buckthorn (*Hippophae*).
Bamboos.
Tussilago Petasites (butterbur).
Polygonum (knotweeds).
Spiræas, especially the crimson-flowered *S. palmata*.
Willows, cardinal and golden.
Carex pendula.
Carex paniculata.

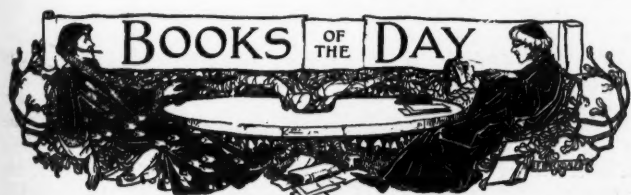
PLANTS FOR WATER.

Villarsia nymphæoides.
Menyanthes trifoliata (buckbean).
Typha (reed mace).
Bulrush.
Cyperus Longus.



IRIS KÄMPFERI AT WEYBRIDGE.

Water dock, its leaves of rich colour in autumn.
Sparganium (burweeds).
Sagittaria (arrowheads).
Calla æthiopica (arum or Nile lily).
Bog arum.
Orontium aquaticum (golden club).
Acorus Calamus and its variegated variety (sweet flag).
Aponogeton distachyon (Cape pond-flower).
Hottonia palustris (water violet).
Club rushes.
Hydrocharis Morsus-Ranæ (frog-bit).
Pontederias.
Alismas (water plantains).
Stratiotes aloides (water soldier).
Nymphæas (water-lilies).



MR. BARRY O'BRIEN'S "Life of Charles Stewart Parnell, 1846-1891" (Smith, Elder), is not a book which can be treated at length or satisfactorily in columns which are strictly non-political. At the same time the story of the man, apart from his politics, of incidents in his career which proceeded from his character rather than from his political views, is of such enthralling interest that the book cannot be passed over entirely. Certainly the man or woman who knows not this work will, in the course of a few weeks, be unable to keep on even terms with others in cultivated conversation. With the political speeches, with which the work is overloaded, I am not concerned. Nobody is likely to talk much about them. But the rod of iron with which he ruled his followers, his cold insolence to them and to all comers, his curt answers, his mysterious disappearances, his cynical views—these things will be read and discussed with acute interest. Mr. Barry O'Brien is no literary artist, but his material has been so rich that he could not fail to produce a book of absorbing interest.

There is a pathetic element in "The Life and Letters of Henry Cecil Raikes," by Henry St. John Raikes, his son (Macmillan). A good deal of the volume is occupied by quarrels at the Post Office between Mr. Raikes and Sir S. A. Blackwood, the story of which it was perhaps hardly wise to revive after so short an interval. On the other hand, it would have been amusing to hear something more in detail of the nature of a certain indiscretion which caused trouble to sundry telegraphists at Cardiff. But as the book merely mentions an inexcusable blunder in general terms, it may be worth while to tell the story as I have heard it. There had been a rumour to the effect that Mr. Raikes, then Postmaster-General, might consent to at end at some Cardiff function. A prominent citizen of Cardiff telegraphed

to his wife words to this effect: "It is all right. Raikes will come on the 9th. He will stay with us." The contents of that telegram came, somehow or other, into the hands of a local journalist, who, with true enterprise, "spread himself out" to the tune of a column or thereabouts upon the impending visit of the Postmaster-General. Unfortunately for the telegraphists, fortunately for the public, which is closely interested in the privacy of telegrams, the reference in the telegram was to another Raikes, who was neither Postmaster-General nor Chancellor of the Diocese of St. Asaph; and of course strict enquiry and subsequent punishment were inevitable. The most striking feature of the book, to my mind, is a note of sadness and disappointment, which the facts really do not warrant, in connection with the political career of Mr. Raikes. His death at the early age of 53 was a grievous sorrow to his family and friends, and it deprived the country of a very able servant. But the tone of disappointment is used with reference to his career, which, I venture to say, was not only successful but brilliant, having regard to its short duration. A man who dies at 53, having been influential in anonymous literature (which often does more credit to a man than that which is signed), having been a successful chairman of committees in the House of Commons, and having also held the office of Postmaster-General in troublous times and having always carried his point, can hardly be said to have been without high place in his generation. Cecil Raikes, if he had lived longer, would have risen higher, that is all. For the rest, this book enables us to form a mental portrait of a man of striking character. Raikes was a man of great intellectual power, and his abilities were polished by Dr. Kennedy of Shrewsbury with all that care which he gave to his most promising pupils. He was an accomplished writer, prompt and resolute in action, and unswerving in his adherence to principle. He had a considerable power of epigram, and he was a very hard worker. In fact he died of overwork, as it is to be feared many others have died and will die in these strenuous days.

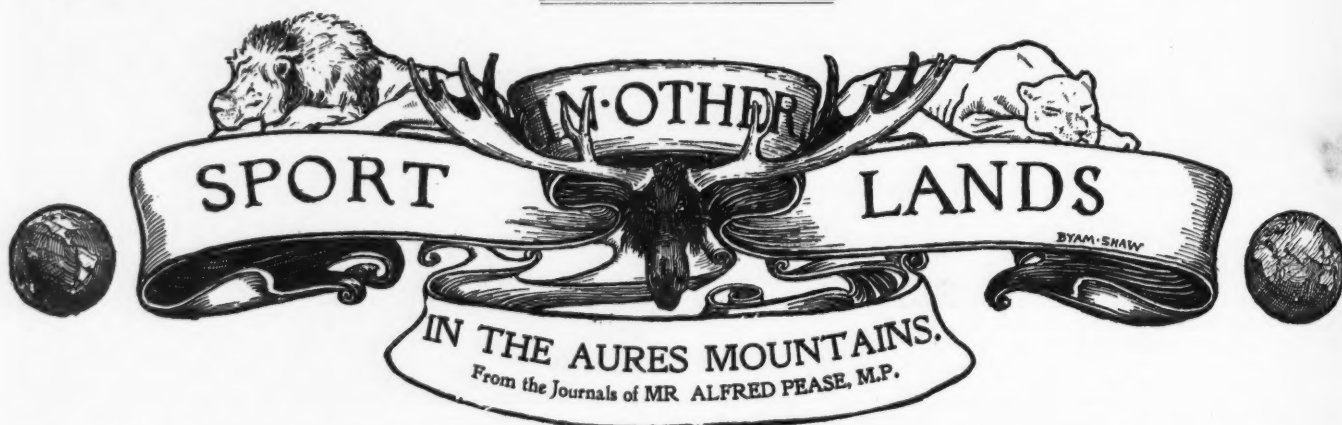
For a long time it has not been my fortune to take up a book more pleasant to handle, which is a great point, or to read, than "Rambles in Lion Land," by Captain F. B. Pearce (Chapman and Hall). The rambles are, of course, those of a sportsman, and the world knows the kind of sport, and of discomfort, that is encountered in Somaliland. But Captain Pearce has special merits. He observes closely, and although he tells us modestly that he has not aspired to excellence of style, as a matter of fact he writes with a straightforward lucidity which would put to shame many a shallows juggler with phrases.

Capitally written, also, is a monograph on "The Badger," by Mr. Alfred Pease (Lawrence and Bullen). Certainly the accounts of drawing wild badgers are full of spirit, and, although the process involves a little bloodshed and hard fighting, it is comforting to note that Mr. Pease does not destroy these interesting animals, but transplants them to districts where they are scarce and welcome. In this way Epping Forest has recovered a wild animal that was lost.

The "Fur, Feather, and Fin" series is always to be relied upon to contain sound and entertaining matter, and "The Rabbit," by Mr. James Edmund Hasting, with a chapter on cookery by Mr. A. J. Shand, is quite up to the average of the series that has come from the house of Messrs. Longman. It is full of pleasant passages. Particularly striking are the pages dealing with recorded instances of the pugnacity of those timid folk the coneys in defence of their young against stoat, weasel, or crow, and the rare but authentic stories of rabbits which have bitten men when picked up out of net or trap, or when wounded. Everything about rabbits is to be found in this volume. You may learn how to plant covert for them, how to recognise and to cure or prevent their diseases, the most humane methods of trapping them, how to make and manage a warren, how to ferret and manage ferrets. Moreover, the descriptions of rabbit-shooting are excellent. Mr. Shand gives some recipes for the cookery of rabbits which sound appetising. In a word, this is a capital book for the country house library, and, if the cook could but be induced to study it, much would be gained.

That wonderful man, Mr. Guy Boothby, has written another book of adventure, "Across the World for a Wife" (Ward, Lock). His art is not of

the highest or most delicate quality, but at least he keeps one moving, and there is no manner of doubt that his villains, at any rate, are real villains. Written short, this stirring tale is of the adventures of two trustees, a barrister and a Bloomsbury solicitor, and a girl, who sail to the Spanish Main to find the girl's brother, Godfrey Blake, owner of a fine estate, who had not been heard of for three years. Richard Morggrave, a spendthrift rascal, but the next in succession, and Mulhausen accompany them against their will. Mulhausen pretends that he was Blake's partner in a mine in South America. The trustees, however, discover in South America that Mulhausen and Blake had never been partners, but that Mulhausen, having stolen £200,000—there is nothing like big sums—had got the money on board Blake's yacht, Blake being ignorant that it was money or that his cargo was stolen. Then Blake and Mulhausen quarrelled, and Blake sailed away alone and was no more seen. That is the position in South America, and the searchers, finding that Mulhausen, bad as his motives are, knows something of Blake's whereabouts, take him into untrusted alliance. They charter a special steamer, and steer for the open sea bound nowhere; Mulhausen announces that Blake is in gaol in Cuba; Richard Morggrave drops in a dead faint. Omitting detail, be it stated that Blake had been betrayed to the Spaniards by Morggrave in relation to some Cuban insurrection. The rest of the story, which rattles on merrily is concerned with the daring manner in which Mulhausen and the barrister carried out the escape of Blake, and with the failure of Morggrave's last attempt at treachery. On the whole a capital story—not quite adult, perhaps, but excellent for boys and not unacceptable to grown men.



THE following notes, entered in the journals kept by Mr. Alfred Pease when shooting the wild sheep of Northern Africa, deal with people and places somewhat beyond the range of ordinary experience of African sport. The Aures Chain lies to the south of the province of Constantine, and divides the more fertile regions of the North African Empire of France from the wastes of the Sahara. Beyond the mountains, on the fringe of the desert, lies the oasis of Biskra, the head of the railway, and the starting-point of the expeditions into the mountains in search of the moufflon and mountain gazelle described in the journals from which these

notes are taken. The scenery, both in the mountains and at the point where desert and mountains meet, is as splendid as it is unfamiliar.

"I know not where so startling a contrast can be seen," Mr. Pease writes, "as during the few minutes that carry you through THE GORGE OF EL KANTARA (the pass where the railway penetrates the mountains) and over the bridge into the boundless Sahara. One minute you are in the dark shadow of towering mountains and cliffs, and passing over a rushing river with palms, oleanders, and green fruit trees clothing either bank; in the next you are out in the blazing sun and endless desert. . . . Right and left of the chaos of crags and precipices that guard each side of the cleft, the range strikes out east and west, and the steep sides are completely furrowed by ravines, as if a Herculean plough had turned the mountains into colossal ridge and furrow."

The game of the district is peculiar to the arid region on the Sahara fringe. Among the rocky hills and the mountains themselves are two creatures, one entirely confined to the region of sun-baked rocks, the other mainly found there, though originally, no doubt, a migrant from the plains. These are the Barbary sheep, or moufflon of the French colonists, the *Tragelaphus* of the Ancients; and the *admi*, or mountain gazelle. The Arabs call the Barbary sheep *larrowi*; in our museums it is most frequently labelled *aoudad*. The Arabs of the North Sahara and its oasis are keen hunters, though the country is far too arid to produce game in any quantity. On the sandy plains at the foot of the hills and on the edge of the Sahara itself they kill the Dorcas gazelle, and in the Sahara, to the south, Loder's gazelle is commonly taken, a creature whose discovery by Europeans was largely due to the initiative of Mr. Pease.

The addax antelope has almost disappeared from this region. It is a migratory species, following the rains, and the Arabs have destroyed the stock in all accessible districts. The ostrich, which was here hunted since the days of Herodotus, has also disappeared during the last twenty years. But on the mountains the moufflon still holds its ground, and the difficulties of the sport of stalking it are such that there is no prospect of its disappearance until the Aures Mountains are as popular as the Alps and Biskra has become another Chamounix.

Round Biskra the mountains survive as isolated groups and masses of rock, most of which hold a few *larrowi* (moufflon) and *admi*, or mountain gazelle; but the setting and surroundings of the oasis are as attractive as the difficult sport among the crags and precipices.

"As you turn the last corner of the hills in the train at sundown you see the green oasis sparkling in an ocean of golden



ALI BEN KASSIM.

light, and half-encircled by the Aures Mountains bathed in sunset hues and shadows. Or if by chance you come by the road the effect is even more startling. Behind you lies the green plain of El Outaia. Around you are the mountains, like giant waves of a stormy sea that has turned into stone in its attempt to break into the endless desert before you. . . . Beyond is the desert stretching to the blue horizon, with here and there glistening dunes of sand, shining like lakes in a land where no water is."

This is the description of the approach given by Mr. Pease in his book on Biskra and the oases of the Ziban. In this delightful but desolate and difficult region the moufflon, or wild sheep of Barbary, is the beast of the chase *par excellence* for those who can stand the fatigue and possess the necessary physique. THE HORNS OF THE MALE are large and heavy, of one arching bend springing laterally from the head, and in good specimens reach the length of from 28 in. to 30 in.

The chief ornament of the male is a flowing beard, fringe, or frill of light wavy hair, which flows from the chin and dewlap, and covers the fore legs to the knee. His leg is short and strong, and his hollowed, strong hoof is beautifully adapted for climbing; his power of ascending and descending the most inaccessible fastnesses is truly wonderful. During the day he is always hidden amongst the rocks and caves in the cliffs and high ground, choosing usually a position where his watchful eye commands a view, but where the most practised human sight and finest glass can hardly distinguish him, so exactly does his colour match that of the ground he lives on. The character of these haunts of the moufflon, where the vertical seems to predominate over the horizontal in the line of landscape, may be gathered from the following notes on a few days spent on Dj. bel Abialh, near Ferkân, some 100 miles east of Biskra:

"March 11th, 1895.—Fried fish for breakfast. A dull day and windy. It tried to rain in the night, but couldn't. We found a *sci-disant* hunter last night. Sir Edmund Loder took



THE GORGE OF EL KANTARA.

him, and I went with Ali. Oh, what a mountain! I never saw such a labyrinth of impenetrable ravines, and hasheish grass for

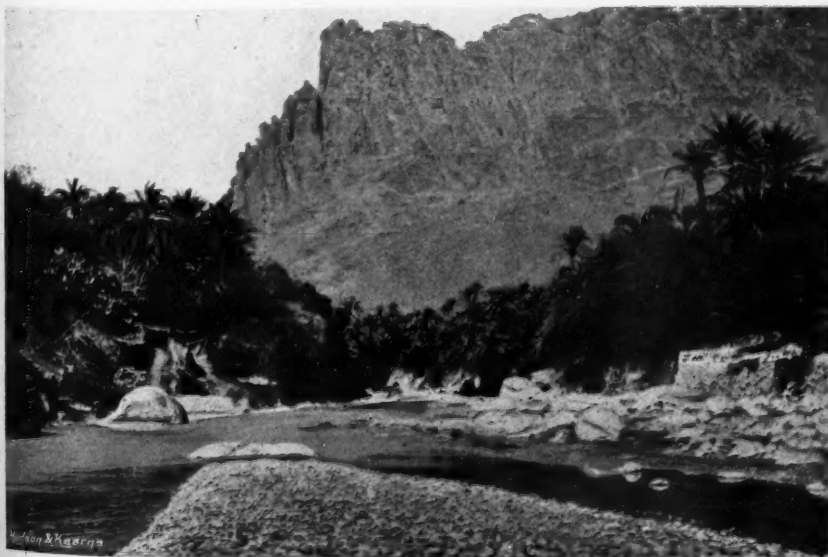
ever. I saw a great many tracks of *admi* (mountain gazelle) in the sand, but never an *admi*. But I saw about 10 o'clock a monarch of a moufflon dusting himself on a ledge, with five or six smaller ones some 500 yds. below me. I had a perilous climb down the cliff face, and then a long steep contour. But by no means—after risking my neck, and sweating and shaking from head to foot with nervous tension—could I get within 200 yds., and the big one was not in sight. One sentinel stood on the edge of the ledge looking our way. I thought it was a male, and I took it standing, with only half a foot-sole ledge to stand on.



ALI AND THE SOI-DISANT HUNTER.

It fell as I touched the trigger of my Mannlicher, flying roof. through the air. The others all made off, but I never saw the monster I had seen enjoying his dust-bath. I climbed up after, and found where he had lain out of sight, just behind the one I had killed, which unfortunately turned out to be a large female. We skinned her, and took a steak off the haunch; then started home about 12.30 o'clock, and got to camp at 5.30 o'clock, after hours of the most HEART-BREAKING CLIMBING in and out of ravines in our efforts to get home. I saw a single female moufflon, and fired at it galloping, but missed it, I am glad to say. The name of this mountain is Djebel Abialh, and the river Oued Helel. Next day I went out with Abdulla before sunrise. He marched straight off to where I had killed the moufflon yesterday, and then took me three ranges beyond. There are two principles for finding moufflon. One is to sit still and watch, and poke into every hole; the other to walk as hard and as fast as you can as long as the day lasts. The odds are in each case five to one against seeing anything. I cried halt at 11 o'clock, and refused to move till 1 o'clock, and then off we went again up and down endless ravines. I saw a galloping wild cat, too far off to shoot.

At 4 o'clock I had an easy chance at a



EL KANTARA.

female had I cared to shoot, but she had two little ones with her—such jolly little beggars. When she stood to look at me, they stood too, all three turning their heads with the same enquiring glance. When she went on, they ambled along on each side. When she stopped to cast a last look over her shoulder, they imitated her. Abdulla was entirely non-plussed at my not shooting."

Better sport was had nearer Biskra itself, during an earlier visit to this hinterland of the French colony.

Two days after Christmas, 1892, "we left for a wild sheep hunt in the mountains with a small equipment—our two horses, ALI BEN

KASSIM, the Arab hunter, two camels, and Chabane. We struck north, and in the picturesque oasis of Branès we purchased barley, chickens, dates, and eggs. The bargaining for barley, catching the chickens, collecting the eggs, and sampling the dates delayed us, but by night we pitched our tent under the Djebel (Mountain) El Goleeah. Next morning I was up at 4 o'clock, and on the mountain an hour before the sun painted it pink and orange and broke



HEART-BREAKING CLIMBING.

it up with great shadows. It is cold in the dawn, and though you know you will be roasted by 9 a.m., you welcome the burning sun.

"Ali is beginning, with my tuition, to beat me with the glass, for he saw four moufflon with the glass before I could find them. Our stalk was a failure, for they moved off; but we followed them, keeping on a higher tier of cliffs, and at 8 o'clock I got a galloping shot at 150 yds. below. The first bullet was behind,

the second in the belly. After an hour or so I got another shot, and again struck too far back. Then it lay down, and I got a quiet 100 yds. shot, and killed. The day after, I had a difficult shot from the shoulder at a fine galloping male, who was with two others, at 200 yds., on the east end of a mountain called 'The Mule's Hind Leg'; and in the evening I missed an easy shot at 40 yds. I could see the ridge of his back, and some 30 yds. below it, standing on tiptoe, so I fired at him. I returned very down in the mouth. Next day, again on El Goleeah, I had an extraordinary shot at an old male, of which with three females I caught a glimpse as they made over the sky-line some 300 yds. above me. I was in the bottom, they at the top, of the stupendous cliffs of the gorge, and I hit him in the base of the horn, and spent the day following him. Like all animals hit in the head, he would never lie down for more than a minute. He beat us; but late in the evening I shot a small beast near the same place.

(To be continued.)



THE HORNS OF THE MALE.

Lobster Catching with Hands and Feet.

THE lobster-catcher who is the subject of the present article is famous in the east corner of the Isle of Wight as a master of out-of-the-way methods of taking fish, and generally for devising ingenious new processes, not only in the domain of sport, but in all unexpected and difficult emergencies or feats of skill. As he is a very quiet ex-man-of-warsman, by no means elderly, but probably about thirty-two or thirty-three, he must have been born a genius in this line. It is quite certain that no one ever taught him half of what he knows, and that few people, if taught, could do half what he does.

He nearly always wins the pig when climbing the greasy pole at local regattas. If there is a duck hunt he becomes the possessor of that much-harassed water-fowl, and, like Chaucer's miller, in all local contests except bicycling, he "bears utterly the prys." But his fame in catching lobsters with naked hands and feet in the reefs of Bembridge Ledge is his chief claim to distinction. I first heard of his skill in this unique art from Captain A. Du Boulay, R.A., one of the earliest pioneers in small boat sailing on the Solent, who was then managing the whole of the queer amphibious estate left at Bembridge by the defunct Liberator Company. The "lobster-catcher" had attracted his attention by his handiness in other things, and at that moment he was employed in the business of exploring the bottom of an old well in the reclaimed harbour, which had probably been sunk in Sir Hugh Middleton's time, in the previous reclamation in the days of James I. As there was a water famine in Bembridge it was intended to get a supply from this old well, which had twice been under the sea. This being a congenial job, he was rather unwilling to leave it for lobstering; but one fine morning saw us early down on the reef, as several fine mornings have done since. There were hundreds of acres of flat rock, apparently almost level, and covered with a dense mat of yellow popweed. Beyond this the German ironclads were steaming off to Kiel, and round to the right lay the great white precipice of Culver Cliff, all showing liquid clear in the salt air across the sea.

Our fisherman met us at Lane End, close to the most easterly farm on the island, where the corn grows down almost to the beach. HIS WHOLE EQUIPMENT was simple—a basket to

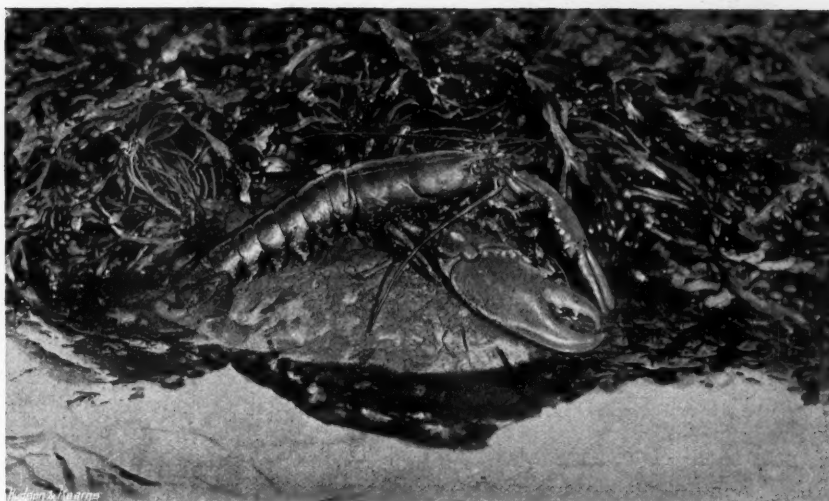


HIS WHOLE EQUIPMENT.

put his lobsters in when caught, and a stout club. The club was for killing a conger, should we be lucky enough to start one on the rocks; but for lobster catching he relied solely on his trained eye, and on those sensitive organs of touch, the

fisherman's hands and feet. His trousers were rolled up above his knees, and his feet were bare, though he recommended us to keep tennis shoes on, as the rocks were in places sharp. He regretted not being able to keep a previous appointment owing to having been "busy down the well." As there is an ancient belief that truth also lived at the bottom of a well, I did not doubt the fact. "Anyway," he said, "it was a capital low tide, and we should get a dozen lobsters before it began to flow"—a prediction which was entirely justified. But the scene and setting of the sport was so pretty and unusual that it deserves some description. This reef of Bembridge Ledge is just like the top of an elephant's molar teeth—layers, that is, of soft and hard material, set up on end and ground flat. Over acre after acre of the hardest rock grows the popweed, thick, wet, and making an inelastic gelatinous cushion over the unyielding rock. This is divided into hundreds of little pools and straight channels, owing to the slight unevenness of the grain of the rock, just as water would lie in the hollows of a mammoth's tooth. These little rock pools are fringed with seaweed fronds, golden and brown, and floored with sand grains, little sea-siftings, tiny feathery sea-flowers, little shells, and a few hermit crabs. Here, too, are crassicornus anemones, some green and some pink. But these pools, though charming to walk through, like pieces of liquid moss agate set in the rock, are not the lobsters' home. They come roaming in over the reef at night, when the tide is all over the rocks, and visit another and more attractive area, inside the outer lines of reef. If this outer ledge is the sea garden, beside it lie what we must call "sea meadows," and as the lobsters take the place of sea rabbits, it is to these marine meadows that they resort to burrow and feed. It is only when they are out for a walk, or A BACHELOR LOBSTER is making his way to the residence of a lady lobster—"out courting," as our fisherman terms it—that they are found among the flat rocks at low tide. We give an illustration of a lobster who has been surprised coming home in the morning at low tide. When happily mated, a pair of lobsters sometimes live in the same burrow, or have two "semi-detached" residences adjacent.

We lost no time in stepping into the cool shallow lakes in which the lobsters lay hidden. There the ground is soft to the foot, for in the shallow pans of the rock-bed the silt of the shore has collected to a depth of perhaps 2ft., and the hard rock is inlaid with a kind of *cloisonné* enamel of good alluvial soil. Over all this grows the long green ribbon-grass (*Zostera maritima*), in fronds 2ft. or 3ft. long, and a quarter of an inch broad, so close as to cover all the ground below water or above it with something like green tresses of hair. The ebbing currents which wind through these sea meadows have cut channels through the soft ground down to the bed-rock, and thus while the whole surface is covered with water the difference in depth is great. Only a few inches cover the sea-grass beds, but the rivers and channels through them are from 1ft. to 3ft. deep. In the sides of these the lobsters burrow like crayfish in rivers; but, unlike the crayfish, they make a "bolt-hole" above, through the sea-grass. Our fisherman soon taught us the art of finding them. Stepping through the pools and lakes, he sweeps the



A BACHELOR LOBSTER.

floating grass aside with hands or staff, and looking down into the transparent water, seeks for signs of the lobster's burrow. This is shown by little heaps of black sand or pebbles, which have sunk to the bottom of the water. Crabs make similar heaps; but a little practice soon shows the difference between these and the heaps at the mouth of the lobster's hole. The latter are much larger as a rule. The fisherman thrusts his foot into the hole at once when he sees signs in the water, feeling carefully along with his toes, which he then thrusts up the hole. As the lobster is usually sitting near the mouth, the toes generally touch him, and the fisherman knows at once that he is "at home." Stopping up this with one foot, he feels with the other whether there is another bolt-hole below water. More usually it is above. In this case he tears off the "turf" from the upper hole, and, as it easily comes to pieces under water, soon drags out the lobster.

On our first expedition he caught thirteen, though in no two cases were the circumstances quite the same. One illustration shows A LOBSTER TAKEN FROM THE HOLE in the approved fashion. The sea-grass is wound like string round the lobster-catcher's ankles, and he is just drawing out the animal, grasping it behind the big claws.

Our search became so successful that even the ladies, who were enjoying the sport, soon learnt to mark down a lobster. To pull him out was less easy. The lobster-catcher keeps all his fingers tight together, pushes them in at the top of the hole over the lobster, and then grasps him by the back and hauls him out. Even so I have seen his fingers badly cut by a bite from a three-pounder. Smaller lobsters are almost equally unpleasant to handle. The writer tried to pull one out, but a moderate pinch caused him to desist. An irresponsible boy who was of the party then expressed a desire to tackle the lobster, and turning up his sleeve, pushed his hand boldly into the hole. The previous attempts had acted on the lobster on the principle of the "penny in the slot," and the machine inside was in full working order. The lobster instantly seized the over-bold finger nearest it, and pinched it till the blood came.

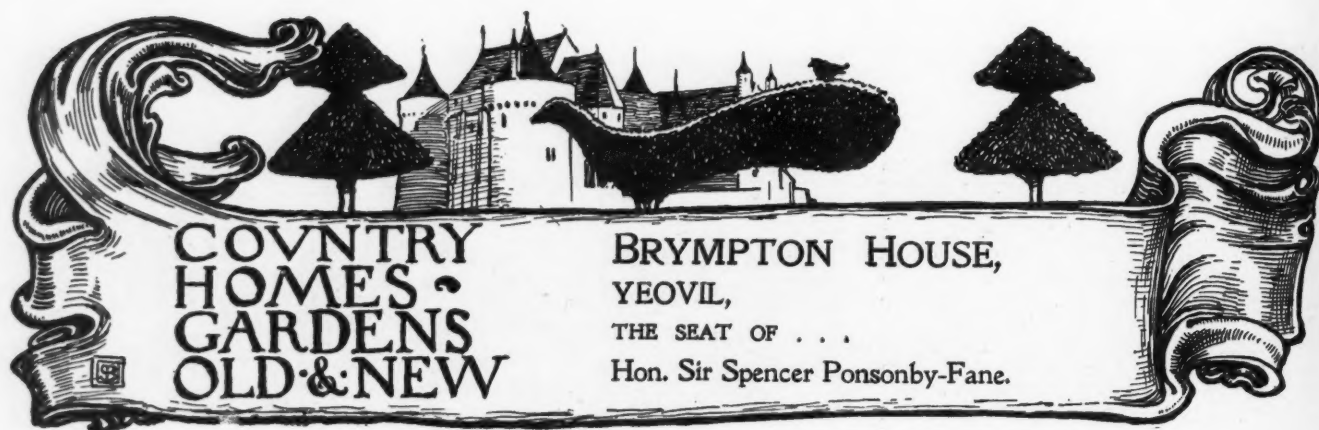
This led to a violent jerk backwards, which caused the lobster to let go and the owner of the finger to drop backwards in an elegant sitting position in the pool, where the lobster must have contemplated him with much satisfaction.

Where the rocks are broken one or two lobsters are often found sitting under a submerged boulder. If this be rolled over, the lobster at once shoots out backwards into the pool, and swims, by backward strokes, to the other side. Here it often knows of a hole or hollow, into which it darts with wonderful precision, as if shot out of a gun. Probably it can twist its eyes round on the stalk, so as to look backwards. In that case the retrograde jump may be less difficult than it seems.

C. J. CORNISH.



A LOBSTER TAKEN FROM THE HOLE.



WHEN you have walked about three miles out of Yeovil on the road to famous Montacute, you should pause to visit one of the most interesting of all the houses in Somerset, whereof several pictures are presented here. The view from the height into the hollow at Brympton D'Evercy is such as to delight the soul of the architect and antiquary. There below you look, as it were, into another world than this. First there meets your gaze a very charming church of mixed Decorated and Perpendicular features, with ancient monuments and a bell-cot of curiously distinctive character, which won the approval of Mr. Freeman. Then, on its north-west side, you are delighted with a chantry house, and recognise it as a most unusual feature, whereat, indeed, antiquaries have been puzzled. And beyond, to fill the picture, is that most charming house which is our subject to-day. Could anything more be wished, when you know that lovely gardens and beautiful woods are also there? Now here surely, you say, is one of those old-world scenes which are still chiefest among the charms of this England of ours.

Brympton had passed through several baronial hands when William Malet forfeited it for rebellion in the days of John. In some manner the treachery was condoned, for Brympton passed

to Malet's kindred, and was held by the families of Fitzwilliam, D'Evercy, and De Glamorgan. Other possessors followed, and, in the fifteenth century, the place came by marriage to John Sydenham, a member of an ancient Somersetshire family. The Sydenhams held it very long, for Brympton descended with them from father to son through many generations, until it reached the hands of Sir Philip Sydenham in 1696. The west front of the house they dwelt in is a very splendid example of Tudor architecture, and of the best Perpendicular character. The north-west part is untouched, and presents a magnificent array of oriels, panelled turrets, quaint chimneys, and open battlements. It is of Ham Hill stone, gorgeously enriched, with Tudor arms and badges, and probably was built by John Sydenham II., who died in 1543. The turret is especially beautiful, and its somewhat anomalous position marks where the Elizabethan hand enlarged the structure, for it seems to have stood originally at an angle of the building, of which the mid-most block was then set back. Now we may see how the hall stands forward, with large and lofty windows, divided by mullions and transoms into many lights, all bespeaking a later day. But still, at the south angle of the house rises a lofty gable of the





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SUNSHINE AND SHADOW.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

earlier time, with a classic window inserted; and then turning the corner, we reach the south or garden front, built, as Horace Walpole records, by no other than Inigo Jones, in the time of the father or grandfather of Sir Philip, the last of the Sydenhams of Brympton.

It will be observed that the house, as we pass along from the west front to the south, gives us no mean epitome of domestic architecture from early Tudor to late Stuart times. Inigo Jones's work has merits of its own. It is simple—some might say monotonous—but, in its way, it is complete and satisfactory. Here is the terrace, which is notable also, and, as deserves to be pointed out, seems as if an integral part of the architectural conception, though it appears to have been added at a later date. Mr. Blomfield, in his "Formal Gardens in England," refers to it at some length. He mentions that the commonest form of balustrade, and, on the whole, the most satisfactory—of which this is a fine example—consisted of stone balusters with moulded plinths and copings divided by solid piers. A broad flight of steps leads down from the middle of the terrace to the garden and the lake, and there are angle flights at the ends, the general effect being, as he says, "very good."

But, before we look closely at the green surroundings of Brympton House, let us glance at the quaint old "chantry house" which lies between the mansion and the church. Some say that this was really the original manor-place, many that here dwelt a chantry chaplain, a few that it really was the stable of the Tudor house. In any case it is a very picturesque building, in two stages, excellent as a piece of Perpendicular architecture, and with a fine turret giving access to the upper floor.

Sir Philip Sydenham, as we have said, was the last of his line at Brympton. Fortune dealt hardly with him, though his was the fault. One of his friends recorded the opinion that

disappointment in love caused his brain to give way. However this may have been, the poor Baronet—a member of Parliament, an antiquary, and a bibliophile—wasted much by expensive living and freakish generosity; though, after disposing of his estate at Sutton Bingham in 1706, he clung to Brympton until 1722, when he was compelled to sell that also. Poor Sir Philip ended his days in London, and is buried at Barnes, but

he had a place in Yorkshire, and five years after selling Brympton, when printing a catalogue of his much-loved books, he quoted feelingly, on the title page, from Job, "Our days upon earth are a shadow," and from the Psalms, "Righteous art Thou, O Lord, and just are Thy judgments."

The purchaser of Brympton was Mr. Thomas Penny, of Yeovil, after whose death the mansion and manor were sold to Mr. Francis Fane, of Bristol, who, through a strange succession of circumstances, ultimately became Earl of Westmoreland. From the tenth Earl it passed to his daughter, Lady Cecily Georgiana Fane, and at her death in 1874 to its present possessor. Lady Georgiana Fane did much to improve the house and its surroundings, and it was she who converted the bay on the ground floor, which was an addition made in 1720, into a picturesque entrance to the hall.

To the student of English gardening, as well as to the architect and antiquary, Brympton is full of interest. The terrace is a fine example of garden architecture, and there is other excellent balustrading with notable

pillars at the enclosure of the forecourt, which is earlier, and corresponds with the balustrading that crests Inigo Jones's work on the house itself.

The garden setting of the mansion is simple and dignified, and a charming lawn leads up to it. Then look at the grey walls, vested here and there with climbers, which relieve the surface, and do not hide the architectural features. There are fine yews, too, sometimes clipped into formal



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THE TERRACE STEPS.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



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ACROSS THE LAKE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

shapes, sometimes permitted to display their characteristic growth, and the strong effects of light and shade are very good. Almost from every point the house can be well seen, and we find beauties in the garden surroundings, whether we approach through the lofty piers which give access to the west side, or look across the open space from the lake to the Italianised front of the later building. Here are pleasant grassy terraces leading down to the water, where is just one of those margins that lend themselves to the skill of the water-side gardener. Firs and deciduous trees of many kinds, bold effects of grouping, and gay beds and banks of flowers have their right places in the charming series of pictures which this beautiful old manor-place provides for us. Thus we rightly say that, alike in its character, its associations, and its surroundings, Brympton House is a delightful place in the land.

Like many an old house, it has a church as its near



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THE WEST FRONT.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

neighbour, and when you are satisfied with your survey of mansion and gardens you may enter among the yews, discover abundant features of interest in the architectural characters and details of the sacred edifice, and there behold the tombs of ancient dwellers in that beautiful hollow at Brympton D'Evercy amid the hills that give birth to the Yeo.

Jipse on Dog Shows: An Interview.

"A-BOO-WOO, Woo-woo, Woo-woo, Woo!"
The scene was a cosy sitting-room. The leading lady was at first invisible, though audible enough. A repetition, however, of her somewhat unpromising greeting drew my attention to a tiny black, tip-tilted nose, excitedly quivering between a pair of large and lustrous, dark onyx-coloured eyes, under a high forehead with a V-shaped white mark, with a round black dot in the middle, parting two pendant black, butterfly-wing-shaped ears, whose vivacious little owner was peering, with every sign of suspicion, from the shelter of a sofa under which the rest of the little creature was ensconced.

To prove my fitness for my task, let me here state that, by an elaboration of the system applied to the study of the Simian tongue by Garner, the American savant, I have mastered the language of the canine race so successfully that their speech presents to me no more difficulties than Hebrew, Sanscrit, or the prehistoric dialects of Egypt. Moreover, I love dogs, and upon acquaintance they love me. Tempted, then, by a *petit burre* biscuit, and certain other irresistible blandishments, the wee coquette soon emerged from her hiding-place, and, displaying a square, cobby, black and white body, half-hidden by the long,

falling plume of an incurved, chrysanthemum-like tail, poised on delicately feathered legs, trimly finished off by graceful, long-haired vulture feet, leapt light as thistle-down up to a cushion on a high chair opposite to me. Satisfactory mutual relations thus established, I set to work to elicit her ladyship's opinions in the usual manner.

"Yes, I came over from Japan two or three years ago.

"No, I can't say I liked the voyage. First there was the sea-sickness—ugh! But I soon got over that.

"Yes, as you say, the sailors loved me, but their way of showing their love was rather trying. Rice, and a little fresh fish having been your usual diet, how would you fancy dinners of perpetual salt junk; and when that gave you indigestion, how would your constitution take to very rancid kippers, washed down with stale, flat, and brackish water as a change?

"Yes, the heat in the Red Sea was terrible. Sometimes I thought I should die for want of a breath of cool air. I lost several friends there as it was. And then the cold afterwards, that killed several more of us, besides those who died of indigestion. Only about one in ten of us managed to survive that dreadful and never-to-be-forgotten voyage.

"Oh, they kept me warm enough when it got cold, but even warmth is dearly bought at the cost of being sewn up in a sailor's old stocking, so tightly that you can hardly move or even breathe.

"How do I like England? Very much; for I have plenty of attendants who are duly impressed with my importance, and I get my own way in most things; and those are two great points with us Japs."

To my enquiry whether she had been exhibited, she replied, indicating with an engaging air of diffidence a document upon the table:—

"If you will look at that list of honours you'll see that if I were not too modest to sport all my medals I should be like a Field-Marshal on a gala day or a member of a Friendly Society."

"But, Jipse," said I "what do you know of such people as those?"

"Why," replied she, rather indignantly, "what do you think we are doing when



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BRYMPTON HOUSE: THE GARDEN FRONT.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

we lie so still for hours with our noses twitching between our outstretched paws?"

"Sleeping," suggested I, with a deprecating smile, "and dreaming of dinners, past and future."

"Nothing of the sort," said Jipse, sharply. "We are either listening to the conversation, or thinking about what we have heard. For you may take it from me that we dogs understand men's language better than they do ours, and so we hear more about you and your ways than you suspect, and what we hear does not always raise our opinion of you."

Declaring that I meant no offence, I promised thenceforth to be startled by no allusions to matters of mere human interest, and, to change the subject, I asked her what she thought of dog shows. But again I seemed to be skating on thin ice.

The little lady's eyes flashed ironically.

"Dog shows, indeed! Well, the name may seem to you to describe those ludicrous exhibitions, but it won't go down with us. We know well enough that they are really man-and-woman shows, with dogs thrown in as an excuse; and a very amusing spectacle you superior beings often afford us."

I begged her to let me waive the obnoxious term, and to give me her impressions of the thing itself.

"Well," said Jipse, "they're funny things from beginning to end. Take the morning of a show. We are just the same as usual, but our attendants are excited, and from an early hour run this way and that, looking worried and flustered, as if they were going to be shown themselves. As for our so-called owners, though from the way they wait upon us you would think they were our servants, they evidently wish us to look our best, oddly taking as much credit to themselves for our success as if they made as well as owned us."

"So, forgetting that we always keep ourselves beautifully clean and neat in our own excellent way, they must needs pull us out here and pat us down there, comb us and brush us (the latter we really like), wash us (which we don't), and anoint us with horrid-smelling stuffs which they think nice. Then, no doubt judging us from themselves, they give us something extra good to eat to put us in good humour, and coax us into warm padded baskets, after buttoning us up in smart great-coats bearing our quaintly-embroidered monograms, with the corner of a lace handkerchief peeping from the breast-pocket, and wrapping our throats up in lovely ruffs of various-coloured ribbons."

"Great-coats, monograms, lace pocket-handkerchiefs, ruffs!" ejaculated I, in wonder.

"Bless you, yes," said Jipse, airily. "Lots of us wear regular boots, too, and a friend of mine is put to bed every night in a real nightgown between sheets and blankets, with her head on the pillow of a tiny bedstead. We aren't responsible for all these follies. But they throw an amusing light upon *your* race, don't they?"

I evaded her question, and asked her how she liked going to shows.

"Well," replied she, "they are a change, you know, and we like that; besides, we have a weakness for being fussed over and admired, and we get plenty of that at a show. And then we're sociable, and fond of company. Oh! we don't mind shows."

"And what happens after you are dressed up and put into your basket?" I enquired.

"Oh! then it's rather fun; we go for a long drive and suddenly stop at a great doorway. Then we hear the ear-piercing clamour of innumerable dogs, expressing their joy, grief, or anger, their interest and amusement, or their boredom and home-sickness, and creating a din like Gideonites protesting in church, the Stock Exchange on a busy day, or the House of Commons just before a division."

This was too much. I began to expostulate. "But how do you—?" when, bethinking myself of my promise, I feebly changed my query to "How do you stand such a noise?"

"Well," said Jipse, slyly, "it's cheerful; and we're not absolutely silent, you know, ourselves."

"And then you go in, I suppose?"

"That is to say, we are carried in," corrected Jipse, "by men in uniform, looking like something between firemen and

fishermen, with caps with red bands bearing the name of our favourite food in large letters—a delicate compliment just to make us feel at home. These fellows hustle and jostle through a crowd of others similarly laden, and put us on a table near the turnstile, where we are examined by doctors to see whether we have anything catching."

"An excellent and wise precaution," said I.

"Doubtless," replied Jipse; "but, strange to say, the doctors pay no attention to our human companions, who may enter free to infect one another as much as they please. Somehow," added Jipse, thoughtfully, "that doesn't seem quite logical."

"I'm very much of your opinion," said I; "but proceed."

"Having, like raw recruits, passed the doctor," she continued, "we are taken to a large space, bordered with rows on rows of iron barred and padlocked prison cells, each bearing our distinctive number, in one of which we are deposited in solitary confinement. Our attendants, however, soon produce soft cushions, with covers chosen to enhance our various complexions, and placing them under us in our cells, they hang their fronts with lace or gaily-coloured curtains, or even sometimes protect us with glass windows, transforming our abodes into snug boudoirs, worthier of our dainty persons. Then it is that the real humours of the show begin. Suddenly, as a sleeping hen-roost bursts into vocal life at the footstep of a chicken stealer, there mingles with our own multitudinous outcries a ceaseless babble of human gossips, loudly exalting their own and depreciating the exhibits of their friends. From the way in which they talk, one would take every dog in the show for a champion of Christendom at the very least."

"Ah!" interjected I, sagely, "but don't the judges very soon reduce such extravagant estimates to reason?"

"True," replied Jipse, with a queer twinkle in her eye; "I was just coming to those same judges."

"The screaming farce in which the judges play the leading part," continued she, "usually opens the performance. Each judge has his own ring in which we must compete; and because nothing is more likely to make one sick than the peculiarities of judging, each judge, like a passenger ship, has his own steward."

"Jipse, Jipse," said I, "aren't you a wee bit hard upon the judges?"

"Don't mistake me," replied the little lady; "I bring no charge against their characters, honest men. They only judge according to their lights, but to a simple dog their lights appear distorted. If not, why is it that the eccentricities—the giants, the dwarfs, the exaggerations to the point of deformity—seem mostly to please them, whilst the fine,

healthy, happy mean is so often left out in the cold?"

"Come," said I, "is not that really a little too strong?"

"Oh, it doesn't apply so much to Japs," replied Jipse. "I confess we are generally judged rightly enough, though some judges do seem to like weeds and abortions. But, upon reflection, I think you'll own that I'm not altogether wrong in the main. Consider, is it not true that to captivate the judges every point must be exaggerated? Must not a short-nosed dog be as noseless as a cricket ball; one with large, full, and lustrous eyes as goggle-eyed as a lobster; an elegantly bent tail look *kinky*, and almost broken? Don't the great broad-chested fellows have to appear out-at-elbows; and must not the teeth of the under-hung breeds actually almost block up their nostrils? Look at eyes; why, if by Nature slightly reddened at the corners, they are not considered correct unless hideously bloodshot. Are not the bloodhounds so called from this peculiarity?"

"Jipse," asked I, "are you quite sure about that?"

"Oh," said she, confidently, "there's no doubt about the fact; the deduction is my own. Again, isn't it true that long dogs must be positively endless, whilst short ones must finish before they have well begun? Take hair, for instance. Why, a Yorkshire terrier told me the other day that his long hair, reaching far below his feet, and its incessant brushing and combing, takes all the pleasure out of his life, and makes him long to be a hairless Mexican! And no wonder; for I have seen him brought out of a glass-fronted box, and set upon a tall pedestal in the ring, so that his hair might have room to hang down to its full length without resting on the ground, whilst his nurse never



JIPSE

ceased brushing him for a second until, full of honours and discomfort, he was popped into his stuffy case again. Another friend of mine, from Russia, can't even walk a yard unless his thick and corded coat is tied up over his back with ribbons."

"And what," enquired I, "is your remedy for all these absurdities?"

"Oh," answered Jipse, "I can only prescribe a dose of common-sense. Perhaps," added she, after thinking for a moment, "it might do good to hold a judge show, with prizes to be awarded on the grounds that influence their own decisions. Only I fear the present judges would have small chances of winning, for exhibitors would soon be forced to ransack the side-shows and freak-museums for likely specimens. Dear me,

what a funny show it would be! But it might improve the breed of dog show judges."

Laughing heartily at Jipse's original suggestion, I asked: "And what about the spectators?"

But a gong resounding at that moment in the hall, and a delicious smell of luncheon pervading the room, most unceremoniously, with a whisk of her tail, Jipse leapt to the floor, darted through the half-open door, and I found the interview at an end, and myself alone.

In serving as medium for Jipse's impressions, I must not be understood to endorse them. At the same time, I cannot deny that many good solid grains of truth lie hidden in her playfully exaggerated chaff. BAOUS.

THE SABINE FARM.—NEW STYLE.

A MARKED change is coming over the social life of the villages and rural districts of the counties which may be described as more or less accessible from London. Ancient manor houses and substantial farmhouses are, for one reason or another, deserted year after year by the families that have occupied them for centuries. Large holdings show a tendency to grow larger. Even in "our village," in sleepy Berkshire, on the death of one of the two great tenant farmers who dominated the place, it is assumed, as a matter of course, that his holding of many hundred acres will be added to the neighbouring farm. Business considerations urge that course; almost, indeed, they compel it. The steam-engines and tearing ploughs which formerly served for one farm will now serve for two, the expenses of management will be single, not double, the land will be every whit as well tilled as before, and there will be a marked economy in the labour bill. Also, and beyond all possible doubt, there will be a pitiable increase of winter poverty in a village which has not found the months from November to March easy to live through for many a year. That kind of suffering is, it is to be feared, unavoidable. Petty culture may have its future before it, but in the great corn-growing areas huge holdings, highly farmed upon scientific principles, alone can hold their own against foreign competition. The old order must change, giving place to new; and we can but pity, and help according to our ability, the



H. W. Taunt.

THE BACK VIEW.

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innocent sufferers who fall out by the wayside of the high road of progress.

Still there are compensations in things. Beautiful old manor houses and like buildings, farmhouses in which son has followed father for a century and more, fall vacant more and more. The days are fast approaching when the names of farmhouses will be no more associated with the names of the tenants. We shall not long hear of a farmhouse as "Rapson's" or "Deacon's," place-names in themselves proof positive and touching of the ancient permanence of families of tenant farmers. That these home-like and healthy houses should become empty is a pity; but it is infinitely more to be regretted when they remain empty, and that for many reasons. In an uninhabited state they are of no use to the little community. When they are lived in they cannot fail to add something, be it never so small, to the prosperity of the village. Milk must be bought, and eggs, and chickens; the garden must be tended, perhaps the stable also. In a word, there comes from them a demand for labour and for produce, and that demand is all to the benefit of the villagers. It is with some such thoughts as these, no doubt, that COUNTRY LIFE has lost no opportunity of pointing out how numerous are the present opportunities of acquiring country houses small and great, and how pleasantly life may be spent in them during the summer months.



H. W. Taunt.

THE FRONT.

Copyright.

There are, it has been said, compensations in things. Simultaneously with the inability of the rural folk to continue in occupation of their quiet houses has come to many dwellers in towns a longing for periods of rest in country scenes, a passion for peace and for fresh air which will not brook denial. Travel has its votaries; but the lovers of tranquillity increase in number every day. Lawyers, doctors, men of letters, actors—all who have to endure the stress of active life in London—show a growing tendency to possess, somewhere or other, a cot beside the hill to which they may retire — “the world forgetting, by the world forgot.” The retreat described by Mr. Keary in his latest-born novel is not a figment of his brain, but a real house where a few journalists rusticate from time to time; and it were easy to name scores of busy men and women in London, not passing rich either, who possess their rural retreats, and vow that they are an economy in money as well as in health, and a source of endless pleasure.

The pictures illustrative of this article are, for the most part, taken from an old house in a quiet Berkshire village upon which the writer had the good fortune to swoop during a pilgrimage of enquiry, late in the spring of the present year. The remainder show the placid village, which shall remain nameless, and serve to indicate the great growth of the trees which are the glory of the county. Apart from the Thames, which lies a mile or more away, but is easily accessible on a bicycle—the Berkshire roads are superb in surface and easy of gradient—the trees make the scenery which, without them, would be monotonous. For “our village” is an oasis of greenery, elms, walnut trees, limes, and horse-chestnuts situate in the midst of a vast and hedgeless table-land, and the trees are the making of it.

The house, low and rambling, with quaint old casements and some latticed windows, was built in “spacious times” round three sides of the quadrangle. This is now the back, and the entrance is through a paddock. The picture shows two sides of the quadrangle only, but that on the left, crowned in riotous ivy, with a regular pattern of interstices of brick, is the more interesting side. Along the top storey, which is the first floor, a great bare room, gloomy, and with oaken rafters, occupies the entire wing. It has been called a granary, but the house was clearly never a farm; it has even been described as a private chapel; and the better opinion is that it came into being in the days of home-brewed ale. Of the front view of the house, where the creepers are still abundant, although rural builders engaged in necessary repairs have wrought sad havoc among them, and of the long low windows, another picture gives a good

idea; and surely the blithe, sunburnt child in the doorway adds to the pleasing appearance of the ancient porch.

But the glory of the house is the spacious garden, and health and enjoyment come in the tending of it. Rural marauders and neglect notwithstanding, beauty is there already, and the foundation of a gardener's dream is present. Look at that long cross path, with luxuriant box edges on either side. The huge green limes on the left, the house in the background, the fruit trees on the right, are something to begin upon. So are the Michaelmas daisies and flags in the open bed; and away on the extreme right are a huge berberis, now ablaze with colour, and a bush of the great St. John's wort full 6ft. high; and in the warm earth, alike where it glows in the sun or is darkened by shadow, lies an immense store of simple Madonna lilies, purest of English flowers, which escaped the robbers. “You can grow whatever you'm minded to here, sir,” was the dictum of the casual gardener who knew house and garden in days gone by, when the ladies—one of them lived to be a hundred years old—were its careful occupants. And the saying seems to be true. Walk out of the picture at the far end, and, turning to the right hand, you shall find yourself pass under the shade of two huge walnut trees, which were loaded with sound nuts a few weeks ago; and great was the joy of happy children, and glorious the staining of hands, when they were beaten down. Neat-handed Phyllis herself had to wait at table in white gloves. Beyond, you are in a kitchen

garden, box-edged, with venerable standard roses standing sentinel in the borders already made neat, and beginning to be fairly stocked. With care, and a sympathetic hand, and a knack of coaxing plants into growth, it is astonishing what can be effected even in such a summer as that of 1898; wonderful and grateful also is the kindness of gardening friends. But there is another and a better path. Walk in the spirit away from the house, and turn to the left. Then on your right lies an

ancient wall, ivy-clad, and half-cloaked by a hedge of old-world roses, cabbage and Provence, of snow-berries, of guelder roses, of lilacs, of syringa. You walk under a series of hawthorn arches—think of them in late May or early June!—and at the end is a long nut alley, umbrageous, cool, fruitful, a sore temptation to the village boys. By the side of the nut alley is a green plot, shaded by huge pear trees and apple trees—Ribstons and Blenheim Oranges, mark you!—with

here and there a greengage or an egg-plum, a sore temptation again; but there is enough for all, if only the urchins would refrain from breaking branches and trampling beds. Nor is the store on which we start yet exhausted. for there are pæonies



H. W. Taun.

A SIMPLE PORCH.

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CROSS WALK.

Copyright

and day-lilies in abundance, and the glorious hedge rises from a carpet of violets and periwinkles, and the rich crumbling soil is of great depth.

A house, a large and fruitful garden, and peace, all within reach of the centre of working life, and at a rent, by the year, not greater than one used to pay for poky lodgings at the far seaside for a few weeks. What more can brain-weary man, or children pining for country air, desire in this world? They are always there, ready to receive one with open arms. There is rest in the sound of the creaking windlass of the ancient well; there is refreshment in the music of birds and the murmur of bees; and the cooing of the cushats—they went on breeding until late September—is a soothing sound. Of occupation, and that of the heathiest, there is no lack. To dig and smell the upturned earth is wholesome; to watch the eager and trustful robins tripping on to each spadeful of new earth is a joy. Cuttings to be planted, roses to be pruned, creepers to be trained, old plants to be divided, new plans to be made, absorb the sunny days. And, if man wants to wrestle with adversity, the weeds are always with him, especially upon the paths. It was Mrs. Earle, surely, who discovered that, to ensure the growth of seeds, one ought to plant them in an imitation path.

Reluctantly, and very seldom, one goes further afield. Sometimes the placid village, with its immemorial elms, doubtless the moot place of the elders, serves our needs. In more energetic mood "we glide on a flowing tide in a galley fast and free," or take bicycle to Oxford, or to Dorchester, or to Reading. But, for the most part, our joys are rural and domestic, and we come back from our summer in a garden, man, woman, and children, bronzed and strong, and full of new interests and new hopes, with great hampers of the fruits of the earth at which the greengrocer would laugh in scorn; but to us taste better, as the Hampshire nurse says, than any boughten things. In a word, the writer has taken the advice of COUNTRY LIFE literally, has followed it faithfully, and looks back on a summer of happiness with the hope of many like summers to follow it in the future.



H. W. Taunt.

A PRIMITIVE WELL.

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ELM TREES IN THE VILLAGE.

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THE RESERVE GARDEN—A PLACE FOR FLOWERS FOR CUTTING.

THE reserve garden is a useful adjunct to the "dressed" part of the grounds, but it need not be a series of plants set out in nursery rows, for these are neither pretty nor interesting. This garden may be as delightful as any other part of the place, but its use is to largely provide flowers only for cutting for the house, or to send away to friends, leaving untouched the plants upon the lawn, or other parts, which to despoil of their flowers would mean destroying effective pictures. This little garden should be approached from the pleasure grounds by a pergola or some pleasant walk. That, of course, is only possible in certain places, but we wish to impress upon those who intend to add this feature to their gardens, that this reserved portion must be laid out with a desire to create a good picture. This is not difficult if the beds be not too small and the garden has a pretty approach. It may be also a nursery in the truest sense, as in it seeds can be raised and plants propagated by cuttings prepared for transference to the flower garden proper. Although this is merely a reserve garden, let beds and borders be thoroughly prepared by deep digging and judicious manuring if needful, and no season of the year is more suitable than the present for digging and planting.

THE FLOWERS TO CHOOSE FOR CUTTING.

It is less difficult to make a complete list of suitable plants for cutting than

to restrict the selection when all are so beautiful and useful. Much also naturally depends upon the taste and requirements of the owner, as one flower may be more precious to some than to others. It is important to get flowers of good self colours, not garish in shade or speckled. Pure pretty colours are more effective both upon the plant and when gathered for decoration. A strong-growing Carnation like the unfortunately-named Uriah Pike, a deep old Clove colour, and strongly perfumed, is worth a hundred of the "fancy" kinds, which are usually of poor washed-out tints, prized unfortunately at the exhibition but valueless in the open garden. Daffodils, the many Tulips (Gesners kind is brilliant in a bowl), Lilies, Sweet Peas, the Irises, Aquilegias, Pyrethrums, Cornflower, Poppy and Japanese Anemones, Poppies (especially the Shirley, the flowers dainty in form and colour), Stocks, Pinks, Wallflowers, Lilies of the Valley, Peonies, Christmas Roses, and Violets—these only represent a few of the beautiful flower groups that may be grown for cutting, but it is well not to overcrowd the beds or to grow too many kinds. It is in the flower garden itself and the mixed border that greater variety can be shown.

THE GUERNSEY LILIES.

Nerines are known by the above name, although it is from the Cape and the Far East that we have obtained these jewels of late autumn, when their brilliant flowers, flashing with colour, appear bunched together on tall stems. The best known is *N. sarniensis*, and of late years we have had added to the family many seedlings. Mr. Elwes, whom we have to thank for many alpine, Lilies, and other flowers that now adorn our gardens, exhibited several exquisite seedlings at a recent meeting of the Royal Horticultural Society, the flowers varying from soft pink to brilliant crimson, and spangled, so to say, due to bright incrustations upon the florets. The older forms are, however, very beautiful—*N. corusca*, *N. Fothergilli* and its variety major, *N. crispa*, and *N. venusta*—but the hybrids and seedlings should not be forgotten.

GROWING GUERNSEY LILIES.

It is surprising that these beautiful bulbous plants are not popular when one considers their flowering time and easy culture. A temperature of

about 50deg. is needful during the winter, and when the flowers have faded the leaves appear, so that growing treatment is necessary during the winter months. It is essential to give them a generous temperature at this period, otherwise they will never succeed, and this is where many growers fail. The resting period is the summer, as the leaves turn yellow about the end of May, when withhold water gradually. They may remain dry until mid-August and be repotted every year in the middle of September, removing all old soil about the bulbs. There are many plants little seen at this time of the year which possess strong attractions, the *Salvias*, for example, and these *Nerines*. We suppose *Chrysanthemums* have overshadowed everything else, but this is a mistake. A group of *Nerines* mixed with *Ferns* and foliage plants is indeed pretty.

COLCHICUMS.

Mr. G. F. Wilson, of Heatherbank, Weybridge Heath, sends the following interesting note concerning these beautiful bulbs:—"In spring, *Crocuses* are such popular flowers that I have often wondered that *Colchicums*, blooming in late autumn and equally beautiful, are not more generally grown. In good soil the bulbs increase quickly—our plants at Oakwood have, in spite of the drought, been especially fine this season. That we have had them in large quantities I owe to the kindness of a great gardening friend who gave them to me out of his abundance. One of the most beautiful species is *Colchicum speciosum*, and this is no longer expensive (my first bulb cost me 8s.). My son, Mr. Scott Wilson, took photographs at Wisley of two of our clumps. As I think they show the growth well, perhaps you may like to print one of them."

We quite agree with what Mr. Wilson has written of this beautiful family. *Colchicums* and autumn *Crocuses*, *C. speciosum* in particular, are the most precious bulbous flowers of the dying year. *Colchicum speciosum* is the noblest of all, with its bold rose-purple flowers standing out bare against the brown earth. As the leaves do not appear until spring, it is as a rule wise to plant the bulbs in a groundwork of some creeping plants, such as *Herniaria* or Mossy Saxifrage, to prevent heavy rains splashing up the soil and spoiling the exposed blossoms. Of *C. autumnale* there are many forms—rose, white, double and single, striped, and others, and *C. Parkinsoni* is curiously chequered in colour.

CROCUS SPECIOSUS.

This is a bulb everyone who has woodland or broad lawns should plant largely, and it is very reasonable in price. The flowers are about the size of those of an ordinary Dutch spring *Crocus* and rich purple with deep orange stigmata, or centre. When the flowers open out wide to the autumn sun this orange and purple colouring is intense. We lately noticed a group in full bloom, and never saw so late in the year a more brilliant colour-picture. It increases freely, and is as effective and beautiful as any *Crocus* of the spring. Summer is the time to



A COLONY OF COLCHICUMS.

plant *Colchicums* and *Crocuses*, and they will succeed in well-drained light soil. Heavy ground is not suitable, and we advise them also for planting in colonies in the rock garden or on the grass. Where, however, it is possible to plant the bulbs by the hundred, do so.

FLOWERS THAT LOVE SHADE.

There is no reason whatever why shady places in the garden should not be beautified with flowers, as many kinds succeed under these conditions. One may choose *Primroses*, for example—of which there are many varieties, some double, and very clear and pure in colour—*Polyanthuses*, *Auriculas*, *Forget-me-nots*, *Lilies of the Valley*, *Monkey-flowers*, or *Mimulus*, the common Musk, *Woodruff* (*Asperula odorata*), *Pansies*, *Day Lilies* (*Hemerocallis*), *Daffodils*, *Funkia grandiflora*, the wood and Apennine *Windflowers*, *Foxgloves*, and *Scilla campanulata*, also known as the Spanish Squill, of which there are several forms—white, rose, and light blue, colours reproduced also in forms of the *Bluebell* (*S. nutans*). The Spanish *Scilla* will succeed even in places upon which the sun never shines, and will flower beneath trees, which is a sure sign of extreme vigour and freedom. Of course, in half shade many other kinds will flourish—*Paeonies*, *Cyclamens*, *Primula Sieboldi*, and *Snowdrops*.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.—We are always pleased to assist readers in difficulties about gardening matters.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND NOTES.—We hope readers will send interesting photographs and notes for the "Correspondence" columns.



CAUSE OF GUN ACCIDENTS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—“E. G. M.,” in *COUNTRY LIFE* of November 5th, writes in reference to my letter to you on the above subject, asking what kind of gun I was shooting with on the occasion of its accidental discharge, as described in my former letter. The gun was a hammerless ejector, one of a pair of Messrs. Holland and Holland's best make. “E. G. M.” suggests that the gun may have gone off rather in consequence of a jar received than of something catching the trigger—probably the ticket-pocket of the shooting-coat, or the flap of that pocket, as I then suggested and still think. I am convinced that the gun received no jar unnoticed by me at the moment. No one was very near me, and I have, since reading “E. G. M.'s” suggestion, purposely tried the gun to see whether, either at “safe” or at full cock, it would go off in consequence of such a jar as he speaks of; but though I have tried it with some pretty severe jars, the mechanism seems to take no notice of them, and I see no ground for accepting the suggestion. I was walking on level ground at the time, and could not fail to have noticed a jar of sufficient violence to release the spring. Moreover, I cannot see any difficulty in accepting my own explanation that the ticket-pocket, or possibly its flap, which might have been sticking out, caught the trigger. There were no bushes or trees near at the time. I am obliged to “E. G. M.” for his remarks, but am compelled to adhere to my former opinion that the ticket-pocket caused the discharge, and to see in this innocent-seeming little pocket a possible source of danger, though of course accidents from such a cause are not likely to be frequent. At the same time I am quite at one with “E. G. M.” in thinking that a jar may at any time discharge a gun, even from “safe,” if the safety action be of a faulty kind, and his suggestion is one that might well be laid to heart by those who are buying a new gun. A few sharp blows on the stock would be a trial to which no maker should object to his guns being subjected, and if such jars were found to release the spring, such a result would surely be enough to condemn the gun at once as an unsafe weapon. —MEDICUS.

THE DAIRY SHOW—ARE THE AWARDS CONTRADICTIONARY?

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—In your article on the Dairy Show the cases quoted in which cows that had won a prize “on inspection” failed to win a prize in the milking trials, and of cows which won prizes in the milking trials which had gained no commendation for looks, naturally arrest the attention. But I venture to think that a fuller list of competitors in each competition would show that there is not so much difference between promise and performance as is suggested. There were in all ninety-four animals entered in the classes for cows at the last Dairy Show. Of these, forty-seven received prizes or commendations on inspection, and twenty-seven received prizes or reserve numbers in the milking trials. But of these last, twenty-two had already been noticed by the judges in the inspection classes, and of the eight first prize-winners in the milking trials, three had won first prizes in the show-ring. I think these figures show that on the whole the combination of good looks and utility was very general, and this is the more remarkable owing to the extreme difficulty of combining the best of everything in any one animal, a difficulty so real that some breeders are willing to sacrifice all other points to gain extraordinary milking powers. It is obvious that a cow bred solely for milk or butter production must have an advantage in a milking trial or butter test over one in whose breeding symmetry and purely show points have also been taken into consideration; yet it would be easy to name many animals which have been great winners in the show-ring and equally successful in the dairy. The best instance of such success at this year's Dairy Show was the shorthorn Gaiety, who at the last two shows has won premier honours in her class, besides winning well in the milking trials and butter tests. It is true that this year she was excelled in the latter competition by Lady H. Bentinck's Proctor, but the butter yield of that cow was quite phenomenal in a shorthorn. A still better example is the Jersey cow Lady Lavinia V., who won first prize at the Dairy Show in 1895, 1896, and 1897, and is the dam of Leyland's Champion, the first prize Jersey bull this year. She has also won several times in butter tests, and gave during the year 1897 1,033 gallons of milk, or just twelve times her own weight in milk in twelve months.—E. A. C.

POULTICING A PEACOCK.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The poulticing of a peacock is sufficiently rare as to form an interesting event in ornithological nursing. Many persons are skilful in applying the time-honoured linseed to the chest of a bronchitic dog, indeed, some bulldogs and dachshunds can hardly expect to pass through a severe winter without a more or less prolonged period of poulticing. The peacock, however, lies outside the usual domain of the home-nursing talents even of the most domestic among women. Nevertheless, it has recently fallen to my lot to assist in the preparation of *bona fide* and Lilliputian linseed poultices for application to the swollen face of

a somewhat aged peacock. It was not an easy matter to persuade the suffering peacock that the soft warm mass was for his ultimate good. Indeed, he proved as restive as does the average child who faces the ordeal of castor oil, and raised his by no means musical voice in harsh protest against the ministrations of his nurses. But once the tug-of-war involved in firmly bandaging the poultice about his rebellious head was accomplished, the peacock proved one of the sweetest and most docile of patients. Apparently—from the peacock point of view—the proof of the poultice lay in the soothing effect it produced. It was evidently grateful and comforting, for on all occasions subsequent to the first struggle, so soon as poultice preparations began, this wise bird would invade the scene of operations, and with a satisfied chuckle—if one may so describe the peculiar sound made by this songless bird—would lay his head on one side in anticipatory joy at the relief from severe pain which the poultice undoubtedly afforded. Unfortunately, this interesting peacock patient died, as his attendant doctor predicted would probably be the case. The peculiar and painful swelling from which he suffered is said to be common among peacocks, and the domestic poultice seems to be the best relieving remedy. Though his nurses were unable to save the life of this model sick bird, their soothing applications went far towards relieving the extreme pain caused by the swelling on the face—a pain evidenced by the bird's plaintive cries and his undisguised pleasure whenever a fresh poultice was applied to the tender spot.—A.

SUNDIAL MOTTOES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I am interested in the letter from Madame Ligonier in your last number, not so much because I am able to help with any suggestions that seem to me perfectly "pat to the occasion," but because I am in the same position of wanting a motto for a dial; so I hope that we shall hear of one or two interesting ones as a result of this correspondence. I feel that I am not able to contribute anything of much value to it. I like your own suggestion, "*Horas non numero nisi serenas*." Most of the mottoes have a gloomy and didactic tendency: "*Memento dum moveo*," "*Life is a shadow, a shadow too am I*." In opposition to the "*non nisi serenas*," there is a couplet in "*Hudibras*": "*True as the dial to the sun, although it be not shined upon*." This is rather a pretty notion, and again I remember that at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, in the quadrangle, is a dial, and either on the dial or the pillar, I forget which, is "*Horas omnes complector*"—all, serene or otherwise. Again Booth has "*True as the needle to the pole, or as the dial to the sun*"; but this has not the graceful fancy of the rather similar couplet from Butler, above quoted. One of the mottoes that I best like was quoted for me by a friend, from Mr. Austin Dobson's verse, I fancy: "*I marke the tyme, say, gossip, dost thou see?*" Somehow the old English seems most suitable for an English garden; but perhaps this is only prejudice. In any case, I hope that the letter of Madame Ligonier will elude answers. I fully endorse her congratulations to you on your paper, if I may be allowed to do so.—F. B.

HEATHER BEDDING v. BRACKEN.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I have been considerably interested in the controversy—for it amounts almost to that—which is beginning to rage in your columns with regard to the comparative merits of bracken and heather as bedding for horses. In particular the letter of "Surreyite," in your issue of November 19th, has attracted my attention, for in it he asserts, no doubt with perfect accuracy, that the commoners in his parts prefer to use the heather, dusty as it is, because the young gorse shoots intermingled with it make good food for horses. Of that there is, although the fact is hardly recognised as generally as it ought to be, no doubt; but the right place for the young gorse is the manger, not the bed. In our parts—that is to say, in that promontory of Carnarvonshire which has Hell's Mouth and Bardsey Island at its end—the value of young gorse as food for horses is recognised abundantly, and the gorse banks on the hill-sides are tended carefully. I have heard ignorant doctrinaires, on surveying these gorse-clad slopes, deplore the want of enterprise in land-owner and farmer, and lament that these fertile slopes were not grubbed up and reclaimed. As a matter of fact, they produce, at the least expenditure of trouble and expense, a valuable crop. The young gorse is cut as required, and is crushed, by water-power machines which are in general use, with straw for the horses. It is an excellent food for horses, and particularly effectual for good upon their coats. Only you must not overdo it. If you do the coat is improved almost out of existence, and the horsehide becomes leather before its time. Wales is a very old country, but it was, we say, born before England, and we know a thing or two in this remote district.—LLEYN.

WAGTAILS IN LONDON.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The great secret of observation in matters pertaining to natural history is, in my sincere belief, not to shrink from the mention of incidents which may seem trivial, but may be of real importance. I therefore venture, writing on November 20th, to call attention to an incident which is, to my mind, interesting. More than a week ago a grey wagtail settled on my study window-sill. In the interval I have been away, but this morning a servant asked me to identify a bird which was apparently endeavouring to make an entry by an upper window. I saw it, and it was identical in appearance with the bird I had seen previously. It had, the servant stated, appeared repeatedly during the past week, but it had never entered by an open window, and it had always taken fright when a window was opened. Probably the bird has been lost, or has lost its way, during the autumnal migration. I mention the incident, because an increasing interest is being very properly taken in London birds, the number of which I believe to be far larger than is commonly supposed. It may be, perhaps, worthy of mention that, without keeping close notes of all birds that I have seen, I have noticed from my window rooks, ringdoves, jackdaws, herons, robins, wrens, several kinds of titmice, more than one kind of gull, cormorants, sparrows, thrushes, blackbirds, starlings, a hawk, and now a water-wagtail. That is not bad for a house with a jam factory adjacent; but it is true that we have the ancient Physic Garden of the Apothecaries' Society in front, the free air of the river, and Bat and Chelsea Park and Chelsea Gardens close by. CHELSEA.

[We are obliged to our correspondent; his is the kind of note that we welcome. Curiously enough he will find that the occurrence of wagtails in Regent's Park at the season of migration is noted in our leading article.—Ed.]

MAKING WOOD NON-INFLAMMABLE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I observe in Vol. IV., No. 97, page 579 of COUNTRY LIFE, a paragraph or two about making wood non-inflammable. I should much like to know whether in a house, built perhaps sixty years ago, with staircases, etc., of wood, they could be so treated as to become safe from fire, without taking the stairs, etc., down and resetting them when rendered non-inflammable. Whether, if so, in like manner the rafters could equally be made safe. Possibly there may be some pamphlet on the subject. Any information you can kindly give will much oblige.—A CONSTANT SUBSCRIBER.

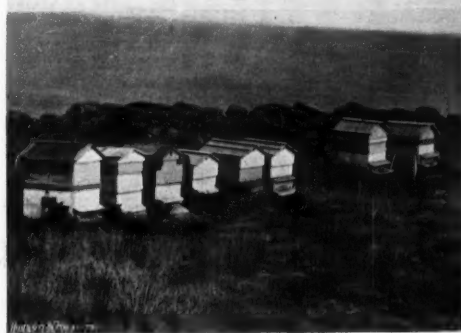
[We are very much afraid that our correspondent could not have his staircase, etc., treated *in situ*. In all probability, if it could be taken to pieces and sent to the place—in Hammersmith, if we remember aright—where the works are, the present wood could be made non-inflammable. At the present moment we are not quite sure of the address of the non-inflammable works, but have little doubt that a letter addressed to the British Non-inflammable Wood Company, Ltd., Hammersmith, would find them, and we believe that the company does send out such a pamphlet as our correspondent asks about.—Ed.]

BEE-KEEPING—AT THE MOORS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—A visit to the moors of North Britain discloses a phase of profitable bee-keeping which dwellers in more Southern Counties are unacquainted with.

Our first illustration shows the hives of bees ready packed in two rows on the trolley for their sometimes long journey (often many miles) to districts where the heather abounds. The going to and returning from the moors are quite events in Scottish and Yorkshire bee life. The method adopted is for several bee-keepers to co-operate, and hire from small farmers, cottagers, and others a location for their hives, in spots favourable for the purpose, for the season during which the heather blooms, extending some four to six weeks in August and September. When the hives are "fixed up," as it is termed, a man is employed whilst the honey is being gathered to preside over the hives and to take charge of the supering arrangements and general management. The ingathering from this source, in a fine autumn, often exceeds 100lb. per hive. The heather favoured by the bees is the common ling (*Erica vulgaris*), bell-heather (*Erica cinerea*, or *Erica tetralix*) producing very little nectar when compared with the former variety. The honey thus gathered is of great density, rather dark in colour, and has to be expressed by a special press, and is of strong flavour. The taste for this honey is no doubt a cultivated one, but with connoisseurs it is considered perfect. The second illustration shows the hives located at the moors; often as many as 100 are placed on one stand in favoured districts. The mode of progression of the bee carts is of course slow and tedious, owing to the lively nature of their loads, and especially so when, as is nearly always the case, hilly districts have to be traversed. The outgoing, however, is attended with little risk, as the bees are confined by perforated zinc



to the hives, and the supers, or store-chambers, are then empty, and of course the hives are carefully padded when placed on the trolleys, so as to minimise all jarring as much as possible; but on the return journey, when a long line of waggons can often be seen, packed with hives containing perhaps tons of honey, wending their way homeward, much care is necessary to ensure its safe arrival without accident. The amount of the heather harvest in the North forms an important item with all those who adopt this method of bee-keeping; and whilst a poor crop like that just experienced means a loss, yet in a good season the profit is comparatively large, even after expenses are paid, as good heather honey has a far more enhanced market value than honey from any other source; hence we can understand the rejoicings attendant on a good "harvest home" of the busy bee on its return from the "Ling O" in the "North Country."—HENRY W. BRICE.

CONGER-EELS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Now that sea-fishing, by the kind offices of "John Bickerdyke" and other influences, is yielding up its delights to so much larger a number, it may perhaps not be amiss to give a word of warning to those who are likely to find themselves engaged with that sporting, but not "childlike or bland," customer, a big conger-eel. I say this the more because I have lately seen a terrific account in a paper of a fight with a conger-eel of some 7ft. long, which had been hauled uninjured into the boat. This had been done, according to the account, by an experienced fisherman. It is hard to credit—it is almost impossible to believe—that any "old fisherman" would have done such a thing. The proper way of dealing with a big conger, as "every schoolboy," to say nothing of

every "old fisherman," knows, is to haul him in until his head is over the gunwale, there to rest it, and welt it with a stretcher or other handy club until life is practically extinct—his fighting powers, at all events, destroyed—and then, and not till then, haul him into the boat. Of course, a small boat with a lively big conger hauled into it would be a small edition of Inferno, with a fine chance of being drowned thrown in. Neither is a 7ft.-long conger by any means so unusual a monster as the writer of the article seemed to suppose. A long line laid out after a storm in certain localities that I know, is more than likely to produce one; but no "old fisherman" in any of these localities will haul such an eel into the boat before his head is bashed. That is one caution that I should like to give, and the second I will illustrate by an object-lesson. I was watching a man fishing from a pier. He had the line let down through a grating in the side of the parapet of the pier. Of a sudden he began to yell, his hand was drawn up tight against the grating, and the stout line was being tugged at by something in the sea in a way that made it cut into his hand and fingers to the bone. He had been fishing with the line wound round his hand. My second caution, therefore, is do not do this. It is as dangerous as sailing with the main sheet knotted tight. This man's hand was terribly cut, and I do not know how we should have freed him, had not a quick-witted fellow leaned over the parapet and cut the line with his knife. As it was, his hand was useless for a month. What it was that had taken his bait we never knew. He thought it was a whale. I always have thought it was a conger.—FRASERBURGH.



THE biographical edition of Thackeray (Smith, Elder) is an accumulating joy and treasure, and with each fresh volume the indebtedness of the world of readers to Mrs. Ritchie becomes deeper. Such are the thoughts which come to the surface after reading the introduction to "The Newcomes," which forms the eighth volume of this invaluable and final edition of the works of the most human of our novelists. There have been, in times remote and times recent, giants in art and letters over the private lives of whom it had been wiser to cast a veil. We do not appreciate "The Skylark" the better from the various revelations which have been made concerning Shelley's private life; indeed it is necessary to lay aside our knowledge of his faults in order to enjoy his poetry to the full. Turner's pictures are a joy for ever, and the knowledge of his life in Cheyne Walk which is forced upon us is merely distressing. So, in a minor but still considerable case, it would have been well, from the artistic point of view, that the manner of his life and of his death should have been kept secret from the public.

But the case of Thackeray is widely different. In all his life there was nothing shameful nor ugly, there was much that was beautiful, that went straight to the heart. We see, in the first place, as much as is good for us of the life of the strong and tender-hearted man. We see, also, how his stories of contemporary life and manners were woven, so to speak, out of the fibres of his own soul; how the men and women amongst whom he lived, the human beings whom he loved, took their places in his immortal books. Like little Clive Newcome, Thackeray was sent home from India to the tender care of a maiden aunt. Aunt Becher, "very strict and outspoken, but very kind," was undoubtedly the prototype of Miss Martha Honeyman. Colonel Newcome was, in some measure, modelled upon Captain Carmichael Smyth. Greyfriars is as pretty a picture as need be of Charterhouse School when it was located in Smithfield. Captain Light, compelled by blindness to seek the shelter of Thomas Sutton's Hospital, "where he lived with the respect of old and young, tended through all the hours of daylight by his daughter, who went back at night to some neighbouring lodging," lived much the same kind of life as the Colonel in his old age when Ethel tended him. Two years, as near as may be, was "The Newcomes" in the writing; but it had been long forming itself in the author's mind. He had thought of it in part when he was writing "Esmond," "the story was actually revealed to him" in a little wood near Berne. The local colour, German and Swiss also, was painted in on the spot. "The 'Newcomes,' it will be seen, led a wandering life." The book takes us, too, to a period concerning which Mrs. Ritchie's memories are clear and complete. She, herself, was the secretary to whom the main body of the work was dictated, but when the time came for the critical passages the secretary was dismissed and Thackeray took the pen into his own hand. "I wrote on as he dictated, more and more slowly until he stopped altogether in the account of Colonel Newcome's last illness, when he said that he must take the pen into his own hand, and he sent me away."

An early copy of the Christmas double number of the *Strand Magazine* lies before me. How the publishers can give so much matter of the first order of merit for so moderate a price is their affair. What interests me, amongst other buyers of the magazine, is the rich treasure of reading to be found among these 208 full pages. Particularly interesting, from a literary point of view, is an illustrated article by Mr. Stuart Collingwood on the boyhood of Lewis Carroll, in which an immense amount of new and pleasant gossip is contained. Personally I have been much struck by the authentic glossary of the strange terms used in the well-known jingle in "Alice Through the Looking-Glass," which is a revelation to me, especially with regard to the meaning to be attached to "bryllyg," "gyre," and "gimble." I always thought "gyre" meant "gyrate," "gimble" was equivalent to turn round like a "gimlet," and that "bryllyg" was "broiling hot." Moreover, I had pictured the scene generally as one of fish and reptiles and water.

That, however, was far too common-place a conception for whimsical Carroll, and the authentic glossary is full of curious interest:—

BRYLLYG (derived from the verb to BRYL or BROIL), "the time of broiling dinner, i.e., the close of the afternoon."

SLYTHY (compounded of SLIMY and LITHE), "smooth and active."

TOVE, a species of badger. They had smooth white hair, long hind legs, and short horns like a stag: lived chiefly on cheese.

GYRE, verb (derived from GYAOUR or GIAOUR, "a dog"), "to scratch like a dog."

GYMBLE (whence GIMBLET), "to screw out holes in anything."

WABE (derived from the verb to SWAB or SOAK), "the side of a hill" (from its being soaked by the rain.)

MIMSY (whence MIMSERABLE and MISERABLE), "unhappy."

BOROGROVE, an extinct kind of parrot. They had no wings, beaks turned up, and made their nests under sundials: live on veal.

MOME (hence SOLEMOE, SOLEMONE, and SOLEMN), "grave."

RATH, a species of land-turtle. Head erect; mouth like a shark; the fore legs curved out so that the animal walked on his knees; smooth green body: lived on swallows and oysters.

OUTGRABE, past tense of the verb to OUTGRIBE (it is connected with the old verb to GRIKE or SHRIKE, from which are derived "shriek" and "creak"), "squeaked."

Far and away the most interesting and important of forthcoming books is "Bismarck, the Man and the Statesman, being the reminiscences of Otto Prince von Bismarck, written and dictated by himself after his retirement from office." The translation, by Mr. A. J. Butler, is sure to be excellent, and Messrs. Macmillan are the publishers. A book of different character, but one which is likely to excite a good deal of warm discussion, is "My Autobiography," by Robert Buchanan, to be published by Mr. George Redway. Among books which will probably be issued before these lines are printed, I anticipate with special interest Mr. J. A. Doyle's "Memoirs of Miss Susan Ferrier" (John Murray), for not only is the subject interesting, but Mr. Doyle is possessed of extraordinary genius and versatility of taste. Mr. Monier Williams brings out his "Figure Skating" (Innes) at a timely moment. But the best news of all is that in "Dream Days" Mr. Kenneth Grahame intends to return to the manner of "The Golden Age"; for "The Golden Age," which excited the warm admiration of Mr. Swinburne, is one of the sweetest, truest, and most humorous books about children that has ever been written.

Books to order from the library:—

"Ave Roma Immortalis." F. Marion Crawford. (Macmillan.)

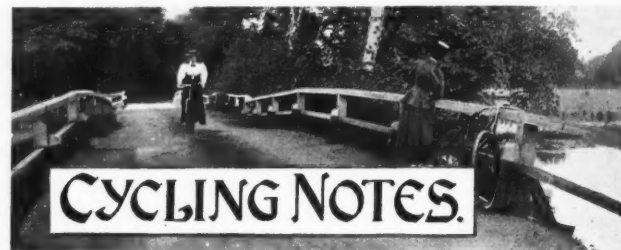
"Twenty Years in the Near East." A. H. Beaman. (Methuen.)

"A Deliverance." Allan Monkhouse. (Lane.)

"The Rue Bargain." R. Murray Gilchrist. (Grant Richards.)

"Mr. and Mrs. Neville Tyson." May Sinclair. (Blackwood.)

"The Ambassador." John Oliver Hobbes. (Unwin.) LOOKER-ON.



THE STANLEY SHOW.

MORE varied than ever is the 22nd Stanley Show of cycles now being held at the Agricultural Hall, and, particularly at night time, with electric illumination of the stands, the place wears even a brilliant aspect. There appears to be less limit placed upon the exhibitors at the Stanley than at the National in the way of decorations, and anything more elaborate than the wrought-iron erection over and round the Swift Cycle Company's stand has probably never been seen. The Elswick display is also highly ornate, and the Humber, Enfield, Osmond, and Rudge-Whitworth exhibits are imposing as ever. Although the Stanley has almost come to be regarded as in the main a London show, while the National is chiefly representative of Birmingham and Coventry, there are now at the Agricultural Hall a goodly number of important provincial firms, including, besides those mentioned above, the Ariel Company, Marriott and Cooper, Jointless Rim Company, Engineer Company, Trent Company, Palmer Tyre Company, Scottish Tyre Company, and others.

The Humber exhibit, of course, attracts a good deal of attention, owing to the deserved reputation of the firm for excellence of workmanship. Among the new features this year is the introduction of a machine of specially ornamental finish, for which £30 net cash will be charged. The duplication of the rear forks has now been extended to the front forks, and a rocking handle-bar has been brought out for the benefit of ladies who experience too much jarring from the ordinary type, so that the playing of the piano-forte, or painting and sketching, are interfered with. The Humber firm also exhibits one of the numerous free-wheel machines that are a feature of this year's shows. The Elswick stand is resplendent as usual with a collection of beautifully-enamelled and highly-ornate machines. This firm also is keeping a stiff back in the matter of prices—which, by the way, are quoted net—believing that there will always be a market for a special class machine among those who desire to boast the possession of "the best." The Elswick innovations this year include the substitution of thin steel for tin in their famous gear-cases.

The Swift Cycle Company's exhibit is noteworthy for the excellence of the machines as well as their splendid setting, and also from the fact that they are catalogued at net prices for the first time. The topmost figure is £22 1s. for a gear-cased safety. Duplex chain stays are fitted to these machines—a desirable feature which is annually becoming more common. The Rudge-Whitworth firm has again reduced its prices, the better pattern standing at 15 guineas, and the cheaper one at 10 guineas. Several minor innovations are embodied in this year's patterns. The Royal Enfield machines remain at 16 guineas and 12 guineas, but the firm has introduced a "Modèle Riche" grade at the enhanced price of £21 net, so that even a "cash price" firm evidently finds that there is a market for something superlative. Excellent value is put into all the Enfields, the new features of which embody a cushion head, a band brake attached to the rear side of the driving-wheel, and a free-pedal machine with the Juhel gear.

"Osmonds" fulfil the promise made beforehand that they would embody features of convenience which should appeal to all riders who attend to their machines, instead of paying repairers to do what ought to be simple jobs.

The wheels revolve on hollow spindles, which are fitted to removable bolts. The loosening of one nut and removal of a bolt enables the wheel to be instantly detached without disturbance of the bearing adjustments. The crank bracket bearings may also be removed without interference with the bearings, the removal of the left crank enabling the rider to withdraw the right crank, chain-wheel, axle, and bearings out of the barrel in one piece. A back wheel which can be drawn off quickly is also shown by the Lightning Detachable Wheel Syndicate, Limited, and in the Epworth machine both wheels can be speedily withdrawn. These innovations deserve encouragement.

Among other machines which ought not to be ignored by the visitor are the Marples, the Engineer, the Milner, the Referee, and the Valkyrie, all of which are of excellent workmanship and well worthy of detailed examination. As a pioneer of cheap prices with sound value, the Sattley should also be noted. With respect to novelties in frames, Professor Lilly's is the most interesting. It is a triangulated frame, but differing in detail from the well-known Brown pattern. The wheel base is extremely long, thus tending to reduce vibration, and if the lateral stiffness is adequate the machine should not hang fire uphill, despite its length.

THE NATIONAL SHOW.

CYCLES at the Crystal Palace have never been more attractively displayed than at the present show. The arrangement of the stands has been improved, and what was always a fine display is now more than ever impressive. The visitor may well enquire "Where is the slump?" on viewing this gigantic aggregation of glittering machines. Brightness and prosperity seem omnipresent, and the show augurs well for the forthcoming season. Were it the only one it would prove an amazing testimony to the growth and strength of the pastime, but when it is remembered that simultaneously another mammoth show is being held elsewhere, the position of affairs is still more striking.

As regards the general quality of the exhibits, there is no room for doubt but that they are of high class throughout, and in many cases of even super-excellence. The list of first-class firms who are represented is indeed a long one, and includes the names of the Premier, Rover, Singer, Triumph, Raleigh, Centaur, Quadrant, and Coventry Cross Companies, John Marston, Limited, Hobart, Bird, and Company, Lea and Francis, Robinson and Price, and other makers of machines; and among the tyre-makers, the Dunlop Tyre Company, the North British Rubber Company, the Tubeless Tyre Company, the Clipper Tyre Company, and others, while the chief lamp-making and saddle-making firms are also represented.

In the matter of prices two tendencies are noticeable, one being to adopt the net cash system, and the other to introduce a "popular" machine even on the stands of leading makers. Neither feature is general, but is none the less marked, and will undoubtedly be still more prominent at next year's show. The net price system has many advantages to maker and customer alike, and, though it is a question of time, it is tolerably certain that the absurd list price system is doomed.

Of radical departures in the way of machine construction there is no novelty of prime importance. A few individual firms exhibit departures from this year's patterns, but changes of type, from the broad point of view, are altogether absent. The machine of 1899 will be, to all intents and

purposes, that of 1898. The most noticeable feature is the adoption by several firms of the "free wheel" idea. Some form of clutch action in each case is provided, by which the progress of the chain and cranks is arrested, and the driving-wheel runs as long as a downward gradient will let it, or till the rider elects to apply the brake. A powerful brake is, of course, essential to a machine of this type, and rim-brakes are mostly in favour for the purpose. To provide against all emergencies, the Singer Company even employs a pair of brakes, one to each wheel.

Rim-brakes, by the way, are decidedly growing in favour, and numerous patterns are on view, some actuated by back-pedalling, others by hinged rods connected with a lever on the handle-bar, and others by the Bowden method of slack wire. Their chief merit, of course, lies in the fact that they are not impaired by the sudden puncturing of the tyre, as in the case of tyre-brakes, whether back or front. It may happen that a more general experience with rim-brakes will show that rims and stays will have to be slightly strengthened; but that is a matter of detail which should present no difficulty, while the power of this type of brake is unmistakable.

Tricycles are more numerous than last year, but combination tandems are the leading feature of novelty. These are so arranged that extra top tubes can be fitted to the front or rear frame alike, and thus afford the opportunity of the machine being ridden either by two gentlemen, a gentleman in front and lady behind, a lady in front and gentleman behind, or by two ladies, so that machines of this description may be regarded as economical investments in every sense of the term, as they can be adapted to the requirements of any family.

There are also a number of double-dropped tandems with detachable top tubes, but made of sufficient strength for the carrying of two male riders if need be. Of these the newest pattern is the Triumph, which has straight lower tubes and two curved upper tubes. Though of high finish, it is priced at £24 net, at which figure it cannot but be regarded as very cheap. Of open-fronted tandems there are very few, the balance of advantage being now all but universally regarded by those who have tried both types to be on the side of the open-backed variety. Of the latter there are a large number, but it is more than probable that they will eventually be superseded by the double-dropped machines, as, provided the requisite rigidity be secured, they offer the convenience of more easy mounting and dismounting to the male rider.

Tyres show several new departures, both with respect to existing patterns and new types. The Dunlop, as is well known, has been altogether altered, both as regards its fastening and the moulding of its tread. The old single wire is gone for good—and high time, too—and a triple wire of greater flexibility employed. Under the name of the Welch-Bartlett the tyre is also to be manufactured with what is popularly known as the "Clincher" edge. In regard to price and quality, both types are to be on an equal footing, and they are in every respect an improvement on the present year's pattern. The Clincher tyre in its first-grade pattern has been altered, and will henceforth be known as the Clincher "A Won." It has always been a popular tyre with those who have once tried it. The Fleuss tyre is as simple and practical as ever, and has been lightened and improved in more than one respect. Among new tyres the Constable, the Black, the Cotterell, and the Lydd may be mentioned.

THE PILGRIM.



A FEW suggestions as to cakes suitable for afternoon tea will, I think, perhaps not come amiss at this time of year. Almost any cook is apt to get into a groove as regards making cakes, although she may be easily kept up to the mark by an occasional suggestion, recipe, or reminder. The following recipes can all be carried out successfully by any careful and intelligent cook:

PISTACHIO CAKES.

Beat seven ounces of fresh butter to a cream, add six ounces of powdered sugar, and beat again for ten minutes; add a teaspoonful of orange-flower water, and stir in by degrees six ounces of sifted flour which has been mixed with two ounces of crème de riz; as soon as this is well worked into the butter, etc., add the beaten yolks of three eggs, and then the whites, whisked to a very stiff froth; mix lightly and thoroughly, and scatter in half a teaspoonful of baking powder. Have ready a shallow baking tin with sides which has been well buttered and lined with buttered paper; pour in sufficient of the cake mixture to be about an inch in thickness, and place it at once in a moderately hot oven. When ready, turn the cake carefully out of the tin, and when it is cool cut it out with a heart-shaped cutter. Whip some cream until it is stiff, flavour it with maraschino, sweeten it slightly, and tint it pale green with a few drops of colouring. Cut the cakes through carefully with a sharp knife, spread them with cream, replace the pieces neatly, and cover the tops and sides with an icing made according to the directions given below; before the icing has time to harden scatter some pistachio nuts, which have been blanched and chopped, over the top of the cakes, and place a crystallised Neapolitan violet in the middle of each. For the icing, whisk the white of an egg to a firm froth, then stir in gradually half a pound of icing sugar which has been passed through a sieve, add three drops of

almond essence and a teaspoonful of orange-flower water, and sufficient green colouring to produce a pistachio tint. Dip the knife which is used to spread the icing constantly into hot water so as to get it smooth and shiny.

KLONDYKE CAKE.

Add to half a pound of creamed butter the same quantity of powdered sugar, and beat with a wooden spoon until the mixture is quite white; stir in four eggs, one at a time, working one into the ingredients before adding another. Then sift in eight ounces of cornflour and one tablespoonful of ordinary flour, and when these are well mixed add a small quantity of Mrs. A. B. Marshall's Concentrated Banana Essence, and enough yellow colouring to make the mixture a decided gold colour. Just before pouring the cake into a lined cake tin, add a teaspoonful of baking powder, and then proceed to bake it in a well-heated oven. Cover the cake with white and gold icing, which, instead of being finished in the usual way with a smooth surface, should be roughened with the back of a knife, so that the different colours form irregularities all over the top of the cake.

LITTLE CAKES WITH TEA GLAZE.

Put into a basin four whole eggs and whisk them for a few minutes, then add six ounces of sifted sugar; place the basin in a saucepan of boiling water, and whisk the contents over the fire until the custard is thick enough to coat the spoon, then remove from the fire and continue to whisk it until it is cold. Add half a teaspoonful of Vanilla essence, and work in one ounce of Groult's crème de riz and four ounces of warm flour; when a light paste is formed add half a teaspoonful of Yeatman's Yeast Powder. Brush over the inside of some small fancy tins with melted fresh butter, dust them lightly with flour, fill them with the mixture, and bake for from fifteen to twenty minutes in a quick oven. Turn the cakes out of their tins, and when cold glaze them with the following:—Put a wineglassful of Indian, or some other scented, tea, which should be strong,

into a small saucepan; add half a pound of sieved icing sugar, and stir until it is quite smooth and warm; then pour over the cakes, and before it sets scatter some chopped baked almonds or desiccated coconut over them.

CHERRY CAKES.

Work half a pound of fresh butter to a cream with a wooden spoon, add the same weight of powdered sugar, and, after beating the mixture for ten minutes, stir in one whole egg and about a tablespoonful of flour, then another egg and more flour, until five eggs and half a pound of flour have been used. Colour the mixture a nice clear pink with carmine, and flavour it with a dessert-spoonful of cherry brandy; then add a teaspoonful of baking powder, and bake at once in fancy tins which have been buttered and floured. When the cakes have cooled, cover them with white icing and decorate them with small glacé cherries which have been placed in cherry brandy for half-an-hour and then

drained on blotting-paper. The same mixture can be utilised for various kinds of small ornamental cakes thus:—Leave it uncoloured, and flavour it with the grated rind of half a lemon and a teaspoonful of the juice, and bake it on a flat tin which is large enough to allow of the mixture being only about a quarter of an inch in thickness. When it has cooled (but is not cold), stamp it out with fancy cutters, and cover the little cakes thus formed with icing of different colours; for instance, brown, yellow, pink, and white. The brown could be produced either by the addition of a little melted chocolate or coffee, and the cakes so covered should be garnished with diced walnut, flavour the yellow with pine-apple essence, and garnish with glacé pine-apple; cover the pink cakes with chopped almonds which have been blanched and browned, and over the cakes iced with white icing form a lattice-work with fine strips of angelica.

CHARLOTTE RUSSE.



"The Jest."

STRANGE are the effects of environment. Had "The Jest" been produced at any other theatre of the first rank than the Criterion, I make bold to say that its critical reception would have been thrice warmer than that which met it at the home of farce, and, more recently, light comedy. For it is a play of quite unusual merit. It combines the rare qualities of heart and head; it appeals not only to the emotions but to the intellect; it is pathetic and it is also metaphysical; it presents a syllogism of sentiment. Mr. Louis N. Parker and Mr. Murray Carson have told a love story in language which is always graceful and sometimes really poetical, though it is not always "in the period." But the last is a fault which may easily be over-rated. If the people in a mediæval play use phrases which are modern to express a thought—well, the fact that they are modern hardly signifies; it is the thought which is expressed which matters; and, so long as the phrase expresses that thought, that is to say, so long as the words are appropriate to that thought and show it exactly, it can hardly be anachronistic; it is the same thing as translating a foreign idiom into colloquial English. Of course, this is an argument which can be carried too far, but, within bounds, it applies.

As a matter of fact, save that the colour and romance lend themselves better to extreme passion than grey modernity, and more conviction is carried by ardent lovers who are dressed in cloaks and armour than swallow-tails and stiff collars, "The Jest" might just as well have been a story of to-day. The problem put forward, its premisses and its conclusion, would have been equally in place in Mayfair this nineteenth century. But more romantic eras have their advantages; and, from the theatrical point of view, the serious motive of "The Jest" gains much from the animation, the gaiety of tint, the freer atmosphere of war-disturbed Genoa in the Middle Ages. But how cosmopolitan and unfettered by time and manners is the matter of Messrs. Parker and Carson's work may be explained briefly. Where lies the solution of the problem which confronts Cesare? He has married a woman he madly loves, thinking she returns his love. But she has become his wife in a moment of pique; it is Cosmo, Cesare's friend, she loves. And when this truth comes home to Cesare, and he tries to find "the way out," his path towards the light is barred; he turns hither and thither, and he knows not what to do.

Nor does the "innocent" who loves him, and feels for him, and would guide him towards duty, really answer the question; for the answer should come from within the circle of the three people concerned—Cesare, Cosmo, and the woman Fiorella—not from without it, not from Orsino, the fool. All that Cesare seeks is the best for her, the best for him. Shall I kill her? he asks. That, says the fool, accomplishes nothing. Shall I kill myself? That, says the fool, would make things worse than before; would you leave her to a life of remorse, knowing that she was responsible for your death? Shall I kill him? That, says the fool, would avail nothing; you cannot kill love. It is very fine and very subtle, this argument between the man who would be wise and the fool; the fool who himself has suffered all that Cesare is suffering, who sees in the story of Cesare the repetition of his own life story. She died, he says, speaking of his own lost love; my love lives, though she lies in her grave.

Then the fool finds the way out; he kills Cesare, leaving the path clear for the other two, unshadowed by the thought that Cesare had killed himself for love of her, ignorant of the real cause of his death. Theatrically, poetically, this is effective and right; but it is no solution to the problem, for the simple reason that there is no solution. There is no way out. But, dramatically, it is convincing and it is effective; the scientifically spiritual aspect of the case does not concern dramatic authors unless it coincides with the dramatically fit.

It must not be thought from this central motive that the play is either dull or gloomy; it grows sombre towards its close, but ere this we have had lightness, incident, variety; and even at the close the tragedy of the thing is saved by its power. The language is nervous and brisk and unaffected—the weight of blank verse has not been added to depress the plot.

As to the acting, while it is not perfect—indeed, from the declamatory and elocutionary standpoints it is far from perfect—it is very good indeed. After all, there is something more than declamation and elocution even in plays of the romantic period of the sword and the doublet. There is nature, there is sentiment, there is sympathy, there is charm. And all these there are in the two chief performances at the Criterion. Mr. Wyndham—though a long course of ultra-modern plays is the worst training possible for such a part, and years given up to the frock-coat unfit its wearer for the deportment of the cavalier—held our attention all the time, at first by his swaggering gaiety, then by his earnestness, his personality, his variety. There is no actor on the stage to-day who could have delivered the terrific monologue of the third act as Mr. Wyndham delivered it. Many would have spoken it with more resonance and poetical inflexion. None could have given it the change, the spirit, the humanity of it. His gradations from fear to hope and back to fear again, the gradual dawning of the knowledge that he is not loved alternating with the belief that he is, a belief which rests on nothing more solid than the wish to believe—and the actor subtly suggests that, though his lips speak the words to persuade himself that his fears are unfounded, his heart knows that they are false—are splendidly done, graphically expressed. Cesare is certainly the most worthy, the most eloquent character Mr. Wyndham has yet given us. Even to fail in perfect achievement in such a case is better than a hundred completer successes on a lower plane.

Mr. Kyrle Bellew, the swaggering, roystering, hot-headed Cosmo, has all the romance of appearance and carriage which such a part demands, all its warmth of temperament. Mr. Bellew is so ardent and so earnest that now and again he seems to the onlookers a little given to posing and affectation. But the truth probably is that the fault is in the eye of the beholder, that Mr. Bellew feels the temperament of the young lover of the South in the undisciplined part, and understands it better than his audience.

It is a pity that the part of Fiorella is not played by an actress who can give to it more variety, more passion than Miss Mary Moore, who makes it pretty and appealing merely. On the other hand, Miss Cynthia Brooke, who as the woman who would prize as a gift of the gods that which Fiorella values so lightly, the love of Cesare, gives to the character a sincerity, an implied devotion, and power of self-sacrifice wholly helpful to the story.

B. L.



IF it be true that Mr. Charles Wyndham has made up his mind to inaugurate his new theatre in Charing Cross Road by reviving "Much Ado About Nothing," himself, of course, playing Benedick, then we shall have a very interesting performance indeed. Mr. Wyndham seems cut out for the part. He has the lightness of touch and the sentiment necessary to the character. But who is to be the Beatrice? One can "see" Miss Mary Moore as Hero, but not as the sparkling heroine. Her gentle simplicity would suit the much-wronged sweetheart of Claudio. Anyhow, it is greatly to be hoped that the rumour is true.

Mr. Pinero is going to write another farce for the Court Theatre, the scene of his earliest triumphs, where he witched the world with sparkling and spontaneous humour. There never was anything quite like the old series of Court farces, which relied on wit of language, the fun of characterisation and invention, and not on *double entendres*, or horse-p'ay. The official announcement of these good tidings says, specifically, a "farce," not a "comedieta," or a comedy; so we are justified in looking forward to another "Magistrate," or "Schoolmistress," or "Dandy Dick." And if the new piece, which we may hope to see after Mr. H. V. Esmond's play, due here shortly, is only within measurable distance of any of these three, the halcyon days of the little house in Sloan Square will have returned again.

Mr. H. V. Esmond, most promising of the younger generation of dramatic authors, is to provide the immediate programme at the Court with a rollicking farce called "Cupboard Love," which is stated to be a kind of answer to the man-o'-forty plays to which we have been treated lately. A capital company has been engaged for its representation. But what we particularly want from Mr. Esmond is that big serious play of which we hear so many whispers from admiring folk who have heard it read.

Mr. Arthur Collins has bowed his head to the storm; the peacocks are "off" at Drury Lane. It seems a pity, for surely nothing more beautiful could have been devised. But æstheticism has given way to superstition, and the pavonian delights will give place to birds of another feather.

At last, it seems, we are to have the long-promised "Lady of Quality," who is, in the person of Miss Eleanor Calhoun, to make her appearance at the

Comedy Theatre. In America, the dramatisation of Mrs. Hodgson Burnett's popular novel has long been a success, and Miss Julia Arthur has travelled to many of the big cities of the United States and met with a favourable reception everywhere. This is the same version which we are to see in London. In it, one hears, the great motive of the book, the motive which causes the heroine to slay her persecutor, is bowdlerised out of recognition. If this be really so it is difficult to imagine how the play can carry conviction, for it must be a very serious reason to make even justifiable homicide on the part of a heroine acceptable on the stage.

The children will be delighted to hear that "Alice in Wonderland" is to be revived for their enjoyment. On December 22nd, at the Opera Comique, Mr. Horace Sedger will reproduce the stage version of Lewis Carroll's delightful story, with Mr. Walter Slaughter's pretty music. Added to "Alice" will be a harlequinade; so, if the show is acceptably rendered, the entertainment should appeal irresistibly to papa and mamma who want to give their little ones two hours' undiluted joy.

The cry for Hugo still goes on, and we are now informed that, in answer to the wishes of a great number of his admirers, Mr. Tree has determined seriously to consider the possibilities of a new stage version of "Notre Dame." If the consideration results in his assumption of the character of Quasimodo, those who tendered him the advice will deserve the thanks of playgoing London. What a part Quasimodo would make; how splendidly Mr. Tree should play it. It is said that Mr. Tree is weary of "character" studies, that he sighs only to be the young lover of the drama. Even if this were true—and we cannot believe it of an artist of the wide purview of Mr. Tree, whose reputation was built upon the variety and the skill of his impersonations of strongly-marked characters—if it were even true that his chief delight is in portraying the lover, what love, what passion, what intense pathos and tragic grief—the tragedy of unrequited, devouring, unselfish love—there are in Dumas' hunchback. A play written with the idea of Quasimodo's splendid passion for Esmeralda, with this for its central idea, its leading motive, would afford Mr. Tree opportunities such as he has not yet met with, and that is saying a great deal. Mr. Tree owes it to his disinterested well-wishers—who are anxious for him to take his place, once and for all, as one of our really great, and not merely successful, managers—to consolidate his position and to make secure his reputation—he owes it to them to give to the public another great character study. Let it be Valjean or Quasimodo, or any other master figure of fiction; but let Dumas, his tinsel and his puppets, rest in peace and well-earned retirement. There is no lasting glory in his novelette creations, which lack blood, marrow, and brain, though their ephemeral attractions may be all that can be desired from the commercial point of view. But, in urging Mr. Tree to unite with romance and splendour the realities and humanities, true poetry and great thoughts, we run no risk of endangering the necessary commercial success. Properly treated, Hugo will not only prove artistically worthy, but will fill the coffers of the theatrical state.

PHŒBUS.



THE fog, that has so far haunted the Belvoir Wednesdays, spoilt our sport last week to a great extent, and necessitated an early return home. Croxton Park was the fixture, where still stand the remains of the hunting-box built by John, third Duke of Rutland, who was sportsman, courtier, scholar, and art patron by turns, but loved the cry of foxhounds best of all his pleasures. Here, too, came the poet Crabbe, in the train of his patron, the Duke, and found a rest from the fancied slights of his life at stately Belvoir in the simpler style of living at Croxton Park. Here, too, lived Lord Forester, the famous Master of the Belvoir Hounds, who also was the employer of William Goodall the elder, probably one of the best huntsmen that ever cheered a pack. The meet of the Belvoir at Croxton has, therefore, the charm of old associations to add to its other attractions, the chief of which is that it stands amid an excellent country, with coverts which hold foxes. Nor can these break in a wrong direction; wherever a fox goes he must show sport. The Wednesday foxes are, however, more famous for quick, sharp spins than for long points. If you want long runs with the Belvoir, you must go down into the less-frequented but most sporting Lincolnshire country.

The Belvoir do not now attract the crowds that once thronged these fixtures, but if when on the Melton side you look round, at the faces present, you will see men and women who will presently give you but a fleeting view of their backs as they race over the stiff country after the quickest pack in the world. Ladies first. Mrs. Asquith and the Baroness Max de Tyll were there. Which of these

is the better I could not see, but both are very good. Mr. Gavin Hamilton, Mr. Hugh Owen, Lord Manners, Mr. H. T. Barclay, and Lord Cecil Manners are hard men to beat, albeit the last is somewhat handicapped by his height and weight. In Stonesby was the first fox, and he ran towards Freeby. Then, swinging to the left, he took an excellent line, and already Melton Spinney loomed high on its hill through the thick air when hounds threw up their heads and, hitting off the line, showed that the fox had been headed. As often happens in such a case, the scent grew feebler as we went on, and died out altogether. The fifty acres of Freeby did not hold a fox, and the fog stopped us at Goadby Gorse, from which we had the sharp little ring I told you of last week.

To write of a run you have not seen, particularly if a good one, is somewhat tantalising, but Lord Harrington's hounds are somewhat wide for me. Had I gone out the line would have brought me, as it happened, right home; but then who can foretell the run of foxes. The meet was Wiverton Hall, a place which has hunting associations with the names of Masters. The fox, which came out of Stoke Gorse as hounds went in, ran a wonderfully good line, the Belvoir woods



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JUMPING A SMALL DITCH.

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seeming his point. However, he sought refuge in Harby Thorns, a covert drawn in vain the week before by the Belvoir from Plungar. There was a capital scent in covert, and as the hounds raced him round it was plain he would have to go. Back he went to Wiverton, and there he escaped. Lords Harrington and Newark, Mr. R. M. Knowles, Miss Knowles, and Miss Pierrepont all enjoyed this capital run.

On Friday, November 18th, the Quorn were at Twyford, and put in a really good day's sport. John o' Gaunt was the first draw. This excellent covert seems to have regained something of its former repute for certainty, nor was it very long before a fox went out for the Great Northern Railway. It was soon evident that scent was only moderate, and that hounds must hunt. The fox, taking advantage of this, proceeded to set a number of puzzlers by crossing and recrossing the railway. Master and temporary huntsman both showed great patience, and with a Friday field behind them worked out the line to Lowesby. Still hunting steadily through the village and park, they worked on towards Baggrave, and it seemed likely enough that the run would come to an end. A timely holloa, responded to by Gabbetis smartly—he has learned that you can lift the Quorn pack if it be needed—set hounds going again past Hungarton and over the hill, in which stands beautiful Quenby, one of the finest Henry VIII. houses in England. Hounds were now much closer to the fox, and drove him across the railroad, pressing him hard, but this fox knew the value of the iron way, and saved his brush for the time, nor was it till after running a ring round by Hungarton foxholes that he was pulled down.

About fifty minutes, more or less, of good hunting over a country which wants jumping—though gates *do* help, no doubt—and after hounds which run when they can and hunt when they must, was enough for one horse; therefore am I indebted for the afternoon run to the account of a stable companion who had two horses out. Thus: "We drew Prince of Wales; the field at the top same as in Lonsdale's time; fox out over the brook at a ripping pace; stiffish line o' country; saw South Croxton on the right, and went nearly straight for Gaddesby; no time to look about much; going up Ashley Pastures horse made a mistake and I got behind; thought they must go into the Pastures—wrong, as usual. Should never think out hunting, only ride, at all events in Leicestershire. Fox actually ran round the covert outside, and I picked 'em up again; got away close, and hounds screamed to ground at Gaddesby. I thought it the best thing I'd seen, but I suppose some fellows will crab—they mostly do."

I cannot resist, as we have had so much of the Midlands this week, quoting a letter from a friend in North Cheshire. He writes: "I cannot pick out days for you, because I must go out when I can. However, we



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KNOWS THE LIE OF THE COUNTRY.

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have a first-rate huntsman, and are having a good season. Handley was the draw, and it was pretty to see the huntsman come out *with* his hounds so quickly and neatly; no blowing of horns, but just a note to keep hounds with him. That horrible Handley drain put me down and several others, nor could I be said to be really with the pack again till they were driving their fox about Eaton. They fairly drove him through, and killed him two miles from Chester after a good hour. Another fox went away from Saighton coverts, and hounds started for a good honest hunt, which, however, gives me nothing to tell of any general interest except that we ran down to the river Dee near the place where the Lord Grosvenor of the day and the 13th Light Dragoon officers tried to swim across and were nearly drowned for their pains."

In the Southdown country the season has opened under the most favourable auspices; good runs and smart gallops have followed close upon one another. If this state of things continues we, or rather our horses, are likely to suffer from a plethora of good sport, for it must be remembered, owing to the backward autumn, hunters are as yet scarcely fit. Last Friday week, when the meet was at Buckingham House, near Shoreham, proved to be no exception to the rule, and the Southdown placed another excellent run to their credit. The

proceedings opened, however, in somewhat tame fashion. A fox was found no great way from the place of meeting, which took the pack by the waterworks and across the Brooks to the banks of the Adur. It is impossible to really ride to hounds in this piece of country, as it is intersected by many practically unjumpable dykes, and should a horse be so unfortunate as to get into one of these, he would be as difficult to exhume as the late Mr. Druce. Our quarry, probably, crossed the river, which is wide here, for all traces of him seemed to vanish when the bank was reached.

Our next draw was the little covert near Old Erringham Farm, which produced a fox of the right sort. Over the first few fields hounds hunted somewhat slowly, but after passing Upper Beeding the pace improved, and when the fox reached the hills hounds raced away in his wake. The line now took us along the northern ridge of the Downs, but as hounds approached Edburton they commenced to descend into the valley, and then made a sharp left-hand turn into Perching Wood. The pack now commenced to gain on their fox, and he succumbed to his pursuers in a field not far from Newhouse Farm. On the Ordnance Survey Map this run measures from point to point $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles, while hounds ran probably $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles farther. Except at the commencement, the pace was very fast, and only two or three arable fields were crossed during the gallop.

Old Wood soon provided us with another fox; this one, however, had no mind for straight running, but he afforded a semi-circular run by Oreham Common and Truleigh Wood to Tottington Wood, where he was lost. The country then crossed was terribly blind and trappy, consisting of ditches and hedges overgrown with weeds and grasses; in these prickly entanglements horses collapsed like pneumatic tyres, and why the score or so of riders who faced these veritable death-traps came off with whole bones still remains a mystery. It was impossible to really ride at these fences, and each one had



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CASTING FORWARD.

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to be negotiated at a walk, so if hounds had run hard and straight across this country we should have had no more chance of remaining with them than the French of stopping in the Nile Valley. One accommodating-looking gap was studded with deep rabbit-holes, in fact this country was full of devilries of all sorts, and I am inclined to think that in crossing it "the bravest held their breath for a time"; for my own part I was not sorry to turn my horse's head homewards when Tottington Wood was reached. X.

The Deserted Hunting Country.

FROM the top of a gorse-patched hill we look across ten miles or so of vale, not such as the neatly-patterned open between the Northamptonshire border and the hill of Slawston, the first of the green waves that rise ever higher and higher up to Carlton Clump; nor like the dead-calm sea of cornland, ruffled near the horizon by the Isle of Ely and the cathedral towers, that divides the old Cambridgeshire hill from the country of Monk's Wood and Barnwell Wold; nor a wide northern waterway, with a blue-grey background of borderland moors; not a country of any individual character, but a typical old English blending, delightfully continent of a bit of everything—of fir-crowned heaths, of hazel-wooded hillsides; a patch of green here, of yellow stubble there; a gleam of water near a peep of grey walls and long Tudor windows; a happy, snug, prosperous-looking country. And yet it is a desert—a deserted hunting country. Its history is a familiar one. Perhaps it has been hunted by subscription; perhaps the dim records of the heroic past have always connected it with the great house, that never took a farthing's tax for the rule, as magnificent as it was successful, which it only abdicated yesterday; but the result has been the same. Landlords have yet to discover the secret of paying substantial death duties out of shadowy rents, and if they keep horses now their children will hardly keep themselves hereafter. The hunt wants money, so do its supporters. There are plenty of meetings, public and private, but they do not seem to lead to the necessary "partings." The latest and greatest of millionaires has just bought the finest property in the country. Now is his opportunity to include in his purchase the devotion of his countrymen. But, with the sagacity of the self-made, he foresees more social greatness in an autocracy of pheasant than a duumvirate of pheasant and fox. As no native Master is possible, application is made to the foreigner, but the committee look askew at what he asks for "hunting the country properly," as he calls it. Almost before most of those concerned have realised that the life of a good old institution is in danger, it is dead. Its chief mourners are the older-fashioned squires, some of the farmers, the doctors, the horse-dealers, and all the ladies—those who sit on side-saddles as well as those who ride astride.

Golden youth, perhaps, is easily consoled. Instead of visiting Melton or Mackley, or Cirencester or Tarporley, for two months, he will permanently intensify the envy with which certain Masters and huntsmen regard modern Government's easy solution of the alien question. As for the keepers, their feelings may be compared to those of a Khalifa-oppressed Arab at the approach of the Sirdar. Some of their masters, too, will point to the big woods, blind fences, small enclosures, and bogs, and ask whether they outweigh the death of a single sitting partridge, or the trampling of a rood of wheat.

These are contributions to one side of the question. For the other we are indebted to the father of golden youth, who, on a sturdy, sensible-looking hunter, with a daughter on another and better-bred one, picks his way towards our hilltop, along a narrow sheep-track in the gorse. Everyone calls him the old squire; and until the race of squires shall share the fate of the dodo and great auk, you will find few finer specimens of the breed. He is a rosy, clean-looking old gentleman, beloved by the rich and adored by the poor. The girl is as good at home as she is to hounds; the fairest, as well as the boldest, daughter of the late lamented hunt. We know we are going to be told that the times are neither "good" nor "old," but we know and love the old squire, and could bear and have borne the same story worse told by worse men. The squire laments the silence of the woods and fields, declares that the pink is the proper colour to succeed the autumn tints, and that there is no figure more appropriate to the foreground of a landscape than the neat one in a habit beside him. He points with his battered hunting-crop to a wide, flat, open country, far away to the west. There is a dark patch of wood in the middle of it, and we know, for we have been there, that distance and the afternoon sun have washed over the prevailing green tints of the fields with grey and gold. The eyes of the squire, remorsefully regarding it, kindle as he acclaims its miles of meadow-land, its firm doubles, its timber, and its water. But among our worst dreams is a



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STRAGGLERS.

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mile away from one side of the central wood, a vast heath, half-bog, half-rabbit-warren, and on another side a near encroachment of lowland plough, whose leading virtue, say its apologists, is that "it rides best when it is *rea ly* wet"; that for one double up to the weight of a horse, there are a dozen that will hardly support a hound; that if the catching, swinging, and hang of the gates are well behind the times, the wire cages of which they are the portals are, if anything, in front of them.

If we do happen to have been behind these scenes of the chase, we are in the squire's audience now, and honestly and heartily applaud his recitation of the wonderful season when that dark square was never drawn blank; when every fox that hounds went away with led them fast and far afield; of that run of two centuries, when their fox clung to the grass, and died, in ten minutes over the hour, an eleven-mile point away, with his back to the rocks where he was bred; how the girl by our side coaxed a four year old, that knew no more of water than what he drank out of his stable-bucket, first over the brook, and turned the hounds to the huntsman, when he swooped them to cut off the last and shortest turn of their fox. Poor old squire! Even if he were twenty years younger, and could bring himself to hunt away from home, he has bred up golden youth in the way he should go (to hounds); and when young blood calls for boot and horse, and gets them, old blood calls for more rent and larger dividends, and does not get them. Will he ever see his sport re-established? He is one of an ever-dwindling majority. The landlords have entered the lists of record shooters. The man who could walk up and kill his share of partridges has become a respectable driving shot; the man who used to ask his neighbour to help him towards killing a hundred pheasants, now has Royalty to beat records of thousands. He holds that the fox is no game-preserver; and even the squire must admit that, to encourage him, now that his occupation is gone, would be sacrificing the useful to the beautiful. Still, he cannot bear to hear of foxes being treated as roughly and readily as the stoat and weasel, and when he hears people complaining of the plague of rats, advises them to entertain a vixen or two in the old breeding earths.

He has himself shot all his life, but a man who is content to help to kill a dozen brace of partridges, or, better still, half-a-dozen, and twenty head more of pheasants, snipe, wildfowl, and ground game, is, according to the man of big bags, not a shooting man, but a poacher. The squire does not mind what he is called, if only he could have back his favourite sport. He would not ask for hounds on Ben Nevis or in the Potteries; but he thinks that a country reasonably huntable ought not to shirk its responsibilities. As he trots sadly and aimlessly where once he has galloped gaily and intently, he hears the big house-party cutting the pheasant record. Royalty is with them. There is no more loyal subject than the squire. But with him, though Royalty can do no wrong, it could not do more absolutely right than give precedence to the sport of kings.



It is never an easy matter to pick the winner of an important handicap. There are usually so many animals about whom it is difficult to form a decided opinion, one way or the other; and I have therefore never envied the lot of those writers whose duty it is to find winners for the benefit of their readers. Last Friday's Derby Cup, however, seemed to me to be an exception to the general rule, seeing that it was possible to narrow down the probable issue to a select party of three, who, in my opinion, looked pretty certain to occupy the first three places at the finish. These three were Eager, the best horse in training at the present time over an easy mile; the much-improved Golden Bridge, who was bound to run well with 7st. 12lb.; and the best of the two Irish mares trained under Mr. P. P. Gilpin's direction at Pimperne, Sirenia and Waterhen. This is what I wrote on the subject in these notes last week: "The Derby Cup should just suit Eager, in spite of his 9st. 6lb., if he can beat the best of Mr. Gilpin's useful trio, and Golden Bridge, who will

probably start favourite." When I wrote these words Alt Mark was favourite, Eager was at 100 to 8, and neither Golden Bridge nor Waterhen was mentioned. The result is now a matter of history, and it will be a long time before we shall see a better race than this, in which the three animals I had selected, when they were all outsiders, raced home together, Waterhen just beating Eager by a head, with Golden Bridge only a neck behind him.

That Dieudonne would not quite get the mile looked as certain as anything could be, but he ran well to the length of his tether, and finished fourth. Why Minstrel should have started favourite, as he did, at 4 to 1, is indeed a puzzle to me, seeing that he is a confirmed rogue, and he turned it up, as I expected he would, before they had gone halfway. Golden Bridge, who, now that he has mended his ways, is probably one of the best horses of his age, was heavily backed at last, and started second favourite at 11 to 2, whilst Alt Mark had backers at 7 to 1, on account of her meritorious victory in the Liverpool Cup, and Eager's many friends supported him readily at 10 to 1, in spite of his crusher of 9st. 6lb.

Personally I fancied him, but feared that he might just fail to give the weight away to something, and this is exactly what happened. A quarter of a mile from home Waterhen was in front, with Eager and Golden Bridge in close attendance, and Dieudonne going well. From the distance the three first-named ran a desperate race home. Eager just failed to concede the required 39lb. to Waterhen, who beat him by a head, with Golden Bridge, to whom he was giving 22lb., a neck behind him, third. Dieudonne finished fourth, and Alt Mark

fifth. There can be no denying that the honours of the race are with Eager, who ran a great horse under his crushing weight, and it certainly does not say much for this year's three year olds that one of the best of them could not beat a four year old, good as he undoubtedly is, over a mile, at this time of the year, with such an enormous pull in the weights.

Eager is certainly a charming horse, and a great credit to his sire, the handsome, well-bred Enthusiast, who is now doing duty in Ireland. He has only one fault that I could ever see, which is that he is a trifle short in his shoulders, though it is not so noticeable now as it was when he was a two year old. But for this he would probably have stayed better than he does. The winner, who, like her stable companion Sirenia, is a daughter of Gallinule, was a very useful filly in Ireland last season, and the connection between Colonel Paget and Mr. Purcell Gilpin has always been a lucky one. I remember seeing both these mares at Mr. Gilpin's place near the Curragh, when I paid him a visit there last year, and thinking what a useful-looking pair they were. Since that Mr. Gilpin has migrated to England, and taken a place near Blandford, where he looks after a few horses for himself and his friends, with Clarkson as trainer. As he has only been there a few months, and has already won two such important handicaps as the Duke of York Stakes at Kempton and the Derby Cup, he has certainly begun well, and his many friends who knew him as a sporting cornet in the 5th Lancers will be glad to think that his successes are not likely to end here.

The Derby Meeting was as usual a thoroughly interesting one from start to finish, and an enormous number of horses must have gone to the post during the three days. On Thursday no fewer than twenty-four two year olds cantered down to the post for the principal event of the afternoon, the Chesterfield Nursery Stakes. This was certainly a puzzle for backers, though they at last made up their minds to follow "the Captain," who was known to fancy Blackwing, and that speedy colt was soon made favourite at 100 to 15. Mr. Leopold de Rothschild started two, Trident and Velo, of whom the first-named was well backed at 100 to 12, and justified the confidence of his friends by a clever half-length victory from the colt by Deuce of Clubs—Ionia, with La Uruguay a head behind the second, and Minstark close up fourth. A length would have brought the whole four together. This was a very smart performance on the part of the winner, who is by Ocean Wave out of Lady Loverule, as he was carrying 8st. 9lb., and giving 16lb. and 10lb. to the second and third respectively. As this race is run over five furlongs, and he certainly showed better form in it than in the six-furlong Middle Park Plate, it is possible that he cannot quite stay the extra furlong. Blackwing unfortunately broke a blood-vessel, up to which point he was running very prominently.

The last race of the day, the Doveridge Stakes, was reduced to a match between Gerolstein and Grodno, which the former had no difficulty in winning by a length and a-half. Why this son of St. Serf and Geraldine has had his appearance on a race-course delayed until the end of his three year old season I cannot say; but he is evidently very smart.

Another big field of nineteen went to the post for the Friary Nursery on the second day, and as only one of these had taken part in the big Nursery of the previous afternoon, that race gave us no line to go by. Esmeralda II., 7st. 11lb., and Deuce of a Daisy, 8st. 9lb., were the original favourites, until London, 7st. 10lb., who had won the Blankney Nursery at Lincoln with 8st. 6lb., advanced to 6 to 1, and passed the Knowsley Nursery Stakes' winner in the quotations. London jumped off in front when the flag fell, always he'd a good

place, and coming away from the distance, closely pursued by Deuce of a Daisy, he won a good race by a neck. This was a smart performance on the part of Mr. Eccles's filly, as she was carrying the top weight, and giving 13lb. to the winner. The Derby Cup has already been dealt with; and again was the last race of the day, the Quarndon Plate, won by Gerolstein, this being his third consecutive victory within the week, and his fourth—the only four occasions on which he has been out—during the present month. Monster fields were more than ever the order of the day on Saturday, and there were some useful handicap performers among the twenty runners for the Chaddesden Stakes, won by Little Eva, who was well backed by the followers of Captain Bewicke's stable. That once highly-thought-of youngster Amurath was seen out for the Osmaston Nursery Stakes, but he failed to give 10lb. to Strike a Light, whilst he only gave 14lb. and a neck beating to La Uruguay, who was a head and half a length behind Trident at 10lb. in the Chesterfield Nursery. I am afraid, therefore, that Amurath is hardly so near the top of the tree as he was once believed to be.

Another National Hunt season is getting into its stride, and we saw a good number of jumpers carrying silk during the week just passed, though nothing likely to set the Thames on fire. There was chasing at Aldershot on Tuesday and Wednesday, on both of which days Parma Violet, a useful-looking Irish five year old, was a winner. On Tuesday she took the Camp Steeplechase, beating that useful young horse, Pope's Eye, and on the following afternoon the Past and Present Military Handicap Steeplechase, in which she gave 2lb. and a twenty lengths' beating to the recent Hawthorn Hill winner, Olibunum. This mare may turn out to be useful.

Plumpton is always a cheery little meeting, and we had some very fair sport there on Saturday last. Pope's Eye had for the second time during the week to play second fiddle, this time to Mr. Gollan's old Waler, Norton, who won by a length and a-half, giving 14lb. to Mr. Swan's handsome five year old. The latter, however, finished six lengths in front of Waterford, once thought to be a Grand National horse, giving him 7lb., and he will probably go one better before long.

The pedigrees of last week's principal winners are not particularly instructive, though Waterhen, who carried on the victorious career of the Birdcatcher blood by winning the Derby Cup, is a well-bred mare, combining as she does Birdcatcher, Touchstone, and Blacklock. Her sire, Gallinule, is a beautifully-bred horse, being by Isonomy (Birdcatcher twice and Touchstone once) out of Moorhen, by Hermit out of Sister to Ryshworth, and therefore straining back to Touchstone, Blacklock, and Birdcatcher. Through her maternal grandsire she gets another strain of Blacklock, and two more of Touchstone through the bottom quarter of her pedigree. She also has three crosses of Pocahontas. A very useful pedigree this, full of Birdcatcher, Touchstone, and Blacklock.

The racing season of 1898 will be brought to a conclusion on Friday and Saturday at Manchester. It will be even more than usually difficult to find winners in the enormous fields which are sure to go to the post for the various handicaps, though Golden Bridge looks to me to have a chance in the Lancashire Handicap on Friday. On Saturday will be run the November Handicap, and I cannot say that the result looks so easy to foretell as was the case with last week's Derby Cup. At the same time, I can see nothing to beat Merman, presuming, of course, that he is preferred to his stable companion, Dancing Wave, in which case it is with considerable confidence that I expect to see him win, especially if he is allowed to stride along all the way as he was when he won the Jockey Club Cup at Newmarket. OUTPOST.

HEDGE-SPARROWS.

QUITE inadequately considered, by those who have a love for song-birds in aviaries and cages, is that most sober-plumaged, sweet songster, the hedge-sparrow. A certain injustice is really done him by classing him among the sparrows, to whose family he is only distantly related, and whose forward manners are quite alien to his retiring nature. Still, he is brown, and they are brown, so they are both sparrows—that is exact enough for the ornithology of most of us. But as a songster the hedge-sparrow is very sweet, though he is not powerful; and this tender age, at which the three youngsters are shown in the picture, is just about the best at which to take them from their proper parents. They are OUT OF THE NEST, that nest which, likely enough, was made so early that the blue eggs proclaimed themselves, gleaming through the branches before there was any leafage to conceal them, and now they are out in the world just as the bracken is beginning to uncurl itself. There are folks, no doubt, and perhaps they are right, who deem the keeping of any bird in a cage a sin and a shame; but perhaps, after all, this is a sentimental objection. A bird's wants do not seem many; given food and drink and sunshine, most of them will be happy, and especially, one might think, so quiet and restful a bird as the hedge-sparrow. With the migratory species it



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OUT OF THE NEST.

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must be very different. It is impossible to suppose that restraint can be placed on that imperious impulse which urges them across the seas without causing them a deal of discomfort. But it is an objection that does not stand against the caging of our home-keeping hedge-sparrow. The little fellow on the highest perch seems as if he were ready to attempt piping a few baby notes already, so if we can catch him we might try him in an aviary.